

IRISH 1798 COLLECTION

A.

R E P O R T

OF THE

D E B A T E

I N

The House of Commons of Ireland,

ON THE BILL,

PRESENTED BY THE RIGHT HON. HENRY GRATTAN,

“For the further Relief of his Majesty's Popish
or Roman Catholic Subjects.”

TO WHICH IS ANNEXED,

A N A P P E N D I X:

CONTAINING,

THE CATHOLIC PETITION,

AND

AN AUTHENTIC COPY OF THE BILL

WHICH WAS THE SUBJECT OF DEBATE.

D U B L I N:

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1795.

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R E P O R T

O F

T H E D E B A T E

ON THE SECOND READING OF

T H E C A T H O L I C B I L L,

M A Y 4th, 1795.

TH E order of the day being read—The SOLICITOR GENERAL rose. I own, said he, tho' I have been long in the habit of addressing this House, that I feel some agitation at present, when I consider the magnitude of the subject which I am about to venture in the first instance to discuss, and which now engages the attention of the parliament of Ireland. I am glad, however, that it is at length become a subject for the discussion of parliament, and it would perhaps have been well for some purposes, if it had engaged the attention of parliament at an earlier period; but however late it offers itself, I am sure it will be decided on with wisdom.

I hold in my hand a copy of the bill, which has been presented by the Right Honorable Member, and though I rise at this early stage of the debate, I hope the House will not think that I have any intention of arrogating to myself more than belongs to an humble individual, who participates in the common concern which most deeply affects us all.

If I felt that any matter was imposed upon me other than what was congenial to my own feelings and sentiments, and to the duty of an Irish gentleman, I trust that the House know me well enough to think that I would decline the task.—This subject is not a novel one: yet it is but fair to say, that the great and only difficulty of the discussion, is to make a fair and simple narrative of the real state of the case, which I shall now attempt by the aid of historical facts, recognized and sanctioned by the legislatures of Great Britain and Ireland, co-operating to form the great model of our constitution, to ascertain those principles to which we are mutually pledged, which attach us to a common centre, which form that indissoluble compact, which is the great bond of our connexion, and on that broad and firm basis shall I rest all that I mean to offer. Though this bill professes to be “for the further relief of his Majesty's Roman “Catholic subjects, &c.” and though it might seem to contain more substantive clauses than those to which the attention of the House will be naturally drawn, I shall not embarrass the House by going into the diminutive circumstances and their probable consequences,

but shall divest myself of all those lesser considerations, which ought not to interfere with your attention to the great object.

The Right Hon. member, and every gentleman will perceive that when I allude to those parts to which I do not wish to direct your attention, I mean that clause which takes away the necessity of any qualification or having or using arms. The qualification in force is that of the nature of 1793, of only two years ago; it was then thought a moderate and reasonable one, and I remember, that in the discussion on the bill, many gentlemen were anxious to have it still greater than it was then enacted.—Another is the last clause of the bill, for giving to Roman catholics in the army a free right to attend their divine service. The reason I wish to divest myself of the consideration of the clause is, because I am bold to say, that there never was a more unnecessary clause introduced in any bill.

I will not impute to the right hon. gentleman any unkind, unfair, inflammatory design, to irritate the feelings of any set of men; but from my own knowledge, and the fullest enquiry and intelligence I have been able to obtain, it never happened, save in one unfortunate instance which became a subject of enquiry, that any circumstance occurred to render such a clause at all necessary. So much, sir, for the two clauses of the bill, the one taking away the necessity of any qualification to bear arms; the other providing against a severity which never existed, and both of them calculated to arm the beggary and inflame the bigotry of the nation. Having thus disengaged the question, I am to call your attention to the most important subject, that was ever agitated in this country—a subject resolving itself into one single question, “Whether you will leave a “trace of that constitution established by what I will ever call the “glorious revolution?”” What is the bold and prominent feature of this bill? it professes to give every Roman catholic permission to sit in either house of parliament, and amounts to a dispensation from taking any of those oaths, or subscribing to that declaration which you will find embodied in the Bill of Rights at the time of the sacred compact between King William and his parliament of Great Britain, which was soon afterwards recognized as extending the blessings of that glorious revolution to Ireland, has been acted upon ever since, and recognized by several statutes; by one so lately as the year 1782, when you yourselves enacted the same oaths in the law which is dignified by the name of that great man, and excellent lawyer, Lord Chief Baron Yelverton, and which passed under his auspices in the memorable era of the Duke of Portland’s administration.

It would not be treating this House with proper respect to be tedious in an historical detail, which I ought to suppose every gentleman here acquainted with; but as such dull tasks often fall to gentlemen of my profession, I shall with brevity enter upon it. It is hardly necessary to mention that before the reformation many struggles took place on account of foreign supremacy in matters ecclesiastical: every body knows that they often affected the good order of England, and the peace of Europe, and with how little ceremony

remony that spiritual supremacy, when successful, transferred crowns and sceptres. From the history of the world, and most particularly from that of our own country, we have learned that the civil government can never endure so formidable a rival as a separate and independent ecclesiastical dominion, such as is claimed by the tenets of the Roman catholic church. The spirit of civil liberty had long fought against it—and the prince or parliament who would admit it now, would sacrifice that which had been struggled for through ages, would hand back the government to the power of priests, would leave them to work upon your counsels, by confession and absolutions, would blast the prerogative of the crown, would hurl you from your sphere, and separate you from Great Britain and her constitution. Every body knows, that after much disturbance and blood, this contest came directly to issue in the time of Henry VIII. when the crown of Great Britain, under the authority of parliament, and backed by the sense of the nation, assumed its own authority in spiritual matters; that in every successive reign the same struggle existed more or less until the revolution, that fatal period to the Stuarts, when a prince presumed to dispense with the established laws, to introduce that power against which the kingdom had so long contended, and to overturn the protestant religion as by law established. Different oaths of supremacy had been enacted at different periods, and from time to time modified by the authority of the legislature—in these Henry had been called the supreme head—Elizabeth supreme governor of the church; but at the period of the revolution, when these qualifications were ascertained and modelled out of regard to the opinions of the dissenters, to whose feelings it was not consonant to call the King supreme head or governor of the church, a modification of the oath was adopted and embodied into the famous Bill of Rights.

In that great record is contained the compact between the prince and the parliament, after setting out the sacred obligation against ecclesiastical supremacy, by which they bind themselves, on these terms *they offer* and the King *accepts* the crown; what is the compact? The law enumerates the many and various mischiefs which had occurred during the reign of James II. from dispensing with the oaths of supremacy, and then proceeds to stipulate for their future observance, setting forth the oaths; the very oaths which you are desired to abrogate. It is observable that before the compact was formed, and before they made a tender of the crown to William and Mary, who were by their coronation oath to be bound in the same terms, they shew the obligation:—for it was natural for King William to say before he would become the protector of their religion and liberties, “ I beg to know whether the compact and obligation be reciprocal ? ” By the same statute it was made necessary on the part of the King and Queen to subscribe the declaration prescribed by the act of Charles II. “ to preserve the King’s person and government, by disabling papists to sit and vote in either house of parliament.”

From that period, *thus* has rested the constitution; and such was the solemn compact received and acted under by both kingdoms from the revolution to the present time.

Before I come to the Irish statute, let me call your attention to the act for settling the succession to the crown, by which the whole of this system is recognized as the great security of the religion, laws, and liberties of the country. I am conscious that in this detail of facts I cannot catch attention so much as the subject demands; but having undertaken the discussion, I should not think myself justifiable in any omission. The convulsed and distracted situation in which Ireland was left by James after his abdication, with a variety of other circumstances, prevented Parliament from sitting here until the 4th of William; and in that interval the English legislature enacted a law, since adopted by Ireland, by which the oaths which I allude to are a part of our law. And what was the conduct of the first parliament in Ireland after the revolution? The members, before they took their seats, took the oaths of supremacy and allegiance, and subscribed the declaration as set forth in the bill of rights; and the first law passed by them was the act recognizing their Majesties title; which act recites, 'that Ireland is for ever united to the crown of England, and the King should enjoy the jurisdiction, prerogative, and authority thereof.' It recites our delivery from popery and arbitrary power, and then recognizes the title to the crown of Ireland, with all its prerogatives and jurisdictions, as incorporated, united, and annexed. It is absolutely necessary to recur to history for some account of that constitution which you are about to retain or part with this night.—It will not be contended that a King of England can reign over his English subjects by one rule of conduct, and over those of Ireland by another; nor will any one seriously argue that it is competent for his Majesty, without the concurrence and advice of his parliament of England, to alter and new model the compact under which he holds the crown of Great Britain, and of this imperial realm, or to absolve himself from that compact, or alter any part of that compact, by which the other component parts of the legislature are bound as well as himself, without the united concurrence of those powers from whence the obligation flowed, and who alone are competent to dissolve this federal and solemn system of connexion.

I have stated these facts to shew that this compact moved from men who thought it necessary to bind themselves, that the compact might be conclusive and reciprocal. On the faith of this compact the parliament and the people of Ireland recognized the title of William to the crown, and with it the obligation of these oaths, which oaths and obligations, in Yelverton's memorable act of 1782, are particularly recited, adopted, and embodied into the Irish code. The title of that law is—for extending the provisions of an act, entitled, *an act confirming all the statutes made in England*.—And it recites that, by an act made 10 H. 7. all such statutes as concerned the common-weal of the realm, were confirmed in this kingdom.—And it recites, that during the rebellions of 1641 and 1688, many statutes were made

made in Great Britain which affected Ireland; and that whereas a similarity of laws, manners, and customs, ought to subsist between Great Britain and Ireland, it enacts, amongst other things regulating the commerce and property of Ireland, that all such clauses and provisions contained in any such statutes as relate to the taking any oath or oaths, or making or subscribing any declaration or affirmation in this kingdom, or any disability for omitting the same, shall be accepted, used, and executed in this kingdom, according to the present tenor of the same.

—Here then is the renovation of the compact, and the solemnities which ensure it at the memorable æra of the revision and renovation of our constitution, in which the right hon. member (Mr. Grattan) had so distinguished a share.

I have hitherto confined myself to the consideration of this solemn compact thus made and ratified—I shall now observe, that the wisdom of the parliament of Great Britain has not thought proper to release his Majesty or themselves from those engagements in which we are equally bound; from which, however, the bill in my hand goes to release members of either house, or persons to be appointed to the several great offices herein enumerated and detailed most accurately—a detail, which I must say I think unnecessary, for five lines would answer the purpose, by saying expressly, that “ notwithstanding any law, statute, or usage to the contrary: notwithstanding the Bill of Rights, notwithstanding any connection or compact with Great Britain, be it enacted that the oaths of supremacy, &c. and all laws to enforce the same be henceforth null and void.” Thus, notwithstanding the series of legislative acts of both countries, in ascertaining and securing our constitution, and (in the language of the Bill of Rights) *our religion, laws and liberties, from the danger of being subverted*; notwithstanding the religious solemnities, by which the prince as well as his parliaments have been bound to maintain them, let all be pronounced to be—

The baseless fabrick of a vision.

The assimilation of laws in matters of imperial concern, is the principal bond of our connexion—the departure from the principle must tend to separation.

But when it is sought to withdraw us from this solemn compact, to establish by law a foreign supremacy, and to annihilate all the statutes which I have recited, it becomes matter of serious consideration. It has been, and may again be said, that the temporal power of the crown will remain entire, notwithstanding this innovation.—Were this a matter never before discussed, I should have little difficulty in refuting this opinion; but when every part of our history is full of the detail of blood and massacre, the consequences of the struggle for temporal power, we shall not be at a loss for a full refutation of this assertion; and as I go along it is my studied and determined purpose, not to speak of the Roman Catholics but with the highest respect—I have lived in habits of as much intimacy and regard with many of them, as any gentleman

who

who hears me—and believe I am near the hearts of many of them. But I will firmly tell the Roman Catholic that it would be a misfortune to him to change that constitution under which he is protected, and civil liberty has been nurtured ;—and that he has no right to demand it, nor have the crown and the parliament, who are but trustees for its preservation, a right to alienate what has been confided to them as a trust.

I have wished to put this question on a ground which has nothing to do with the principles on which the claims of the Roman Catholics have been hitherto decided. From the first relaxation in 1778, the history of this house has been a history of benevolence, kindness, good will and affection from parliament to the Roman Catholics: but in that period there appears no trace of any infringement upon the great boundaries of the constitution ;—and I rely on the wisdom of the house, not to intrench on those land-marks which equally demark the constitution of Great Britain and Ireland. I know it has been industriously asserted, that the Roman Catholics are in a humiliating and degraded situation; I know that factious and seditious men made use of that untrue and unfounded assertion, to destroy the good order of the country: and I feel it necessary to undeceive the Roman Catholics, as far as I am able, to bring them back to a sense and knowledge of the blessings of law, and the comforts of tranquillity. In 1778, property in chattel interests was conceded to them ; in 1782, the inheritance of the land was opened to them ; and down to 1793, scarcely a session passed without recognizing the same principle of kindness towards them ; and at this day, they are under no more restraint as to property, than Protestants are.—The act of 1793, emanating from the crown, and passed under the auspices of a minister of as great consideration and worth as ever sat in this house, was not accordant with the sentiments of some of the most illustrious characters of the country ; that act was declared to be an act of conciliation, it was declared from high authority to be intended as such, and from that period it was hoped that the question would be at rest, and the country in tranquillity. At that time certain gentlemen sought to extend the bill to the length of the present one ; but the wisdom of parliament rejected the proposal by a great majority. Has any great circumstance occurred since to justify this important alteration in the legislative system ? Is the house prepared to say what effect the breach will have upon the sister country, (equally a partner in the compact,) if the bill is successful ; or if it should fail, what effect it will have upon our own people, too easily agitated by discussions which they do not understand ? I know and respect many Roman Catholics of large and opulent property—men by whom I would be proud to sit in any assembly—men who I would be far from wishing to render unhappy or uncomfortable ; but when they seek to sit in parliament, I would say that I would not bend the constitution to a compliance with their prejudices, if they are such as preclude them from

from accommodating to the constitution.—There are not I suppose in Ireland fifty Roman Catholic gentlemen who would seek to sit in Parliament, or who have the remotest appetite for the bustle of public life: it is not from men like these that the clamour now raised can come—they are too loyal—too decorous—too well affected to the constitution, to raise such an outcry as has produced outrage in the remotest corners of Ireland, or to inflame the peasantry, who assemble in thousands because of the mountebank abuse of the word *emancipation*, which they have accepted as a signal for commotion, and which they are taught to think, means the lowering the price of land!—I have said thus much to shew how little interest the deluded peasantry can have in this bill, which they are supposed to seek; and to shew, that notwithstanding the boast of three millions of Roman Catholics being anxious on the subject, not above fifty can really desire it, and not a fifth of that number have a prospect of advantage from it. Is this then a case that calls for a surrender of a great principle that must lead to the danger I have stated? I know that the Roman Catholic peasantry, from their peculiar situation, are resorted to, from time to time, as instruments in the hands of others for very dangerous purposes, in instances where they were not at all concerned; and that the uninformed multitude, *manu quam consilio promptiores*, have been the tools of sedition. On a great subject of this kind, I will speak without flattery or fear; they are both the offspring of meanness and falsehood—the bold language of truth becomes every member of this house—and I will say, that the *bugbear* of three millions being involved in a question of fifty wishing to become legislators, and that the kingdom is therefore to be convulsed, is monstrous and disgraceful [a general cry of hear! hear!]—and yet this is the ground on which we are called on to renounce every claim to British connection!—This subject has not originated with the opulent or respectable Roman Catholics, but with factious bodies of men, who, under the cloak of sanctity and a zealous affection in the cause of God, have no scruple to convulse their country, and send the constitution to destruction. Be assured, Sir, that I do not wish to treat this subject with unbecoming levity, but I beg to remind the house, that innovators have, at various periods of our history, assumed a similar progress, by endeavours to scoff at the religious ceremonies which the law had adopted as the test of political attachment.—If you will give me leave, Sir, I will read a paper that has been thought worthy of a place amongst the tracts of the great Lord Somers, that puts the indecency of those attempts in a ludicrous point of view. The paper I allude to imports to be an address to King James II. from the Atheists, or sect of Epicureans, and runs as follows:

“ *To the King’s Most Excellent Majesty.*

“ GREAT SIR, Since men of all factions and mispersuasions of religion have presented their thanks, for your Majesty’s
“ gracious

" gracious declaration of *liberty of conscience*, we think ourselves
 " obliged as *gentlemen* to bring up the rear, and become *addressers*
 " too. We are sure there is no party of men more improved and
 " advanced by your *indulgence*, both as to principles and pro-
 " felytes of *England*; and our cabals are as full as your royal cha-
 " pel; for your unlimited toleration has freed the nation from the
 " troublesome bigotries of religion. Your Majesty's universal indul-
 " gence hath introduced such unanswerable objections towards all
 " religion, that many have given over the troublesome enquiry
 " after truth, and set down that easy and happy inference, that all
 " religion is a cheat: in particular, we can never sufficiently con-
 " gratulate and admire that generous passage in your Majesty's gra-
 " cious declaration, wherein you have freed your people from the
 " solemn superstition of oaths, and especially from those slavish
 " ceremonious ones of supremacy and allegiance; and are pleased
 " to declare, that you expect no more from your people, than what
 " they are obliged to, by the ancient law of nature; and so have
 " bravely given them leave to *preserve* and *defend* themselves ac-
 " cording to the first chapter of nature's *Magna Charta*. Your
 " Majesty was pleased to wish, that all your subjects were of your
 " own *religion*, and perhaps every division wishes you were of
 " theirs; but for our parts, we freely declare, that if ever we
 " should be obliged to profess any religion we should prefer the
 " Church of *Rome*. We shall never scruple the adoration of an
 " image, when the chieffest religion is *but* imagination: and we are
 " willing to allow the Pope an absolute power to dispense with all
 " penal laws, in this world and in another, and free the world from
 " the fear of hell and devils, the *inquisition* and *dragoons*, and that
 " he would take off the chimney money of purgatory, and custom and
 " excise of pardons and indulgencies, which are so much inconsistent
 " with the flourishing trade and grandeur of the nation. As for
 " the engagements of lives and fortunes, the common compliment
 " of *addressers*, we confess we have a more peculiar tenderness for
 " those most sacred concernments, but yet we will hazard them in
 " defence of your Majesty, with as much constancy and resolution
 " as your Majesty will defend your *indulgence*; that is, so far as
 " the adventure will serve our designs and interest.

From the Devil-tavern, the fifth of November, 1688.
 Presented by Justice Baldock, and graciously received."

Be assured, Sir, I do not mean to trifle with the serious feel-
 ings of the house, the importance of the subject, and my respect
 for you, should oblige me to proceed with deliberative caution and
 reverential awe on this solemn occasion of a debate over which you
 preside with such authoritative wisdom.—I beg to observe, that
 this discussion is not to be confined to matters of mere religious ce-
 remonies, but that it goes to matters which directly tend to over-
 throw the practical authority of the government. By the prin-
 ciples of our constitution, the appointment of judges, the assembling
 of

of councils, and regulation of ecclesiastical jurisdictions, flow from the crown. If a foreign intervention, whether from the Pope or from ecclesiastical councils, which are of equal notoriety and authority, were to be authorised by law, they must have their ecclesiastical courts to decide the property of the country by ratifying or annulling wills and marriages, they must have synods and convocations, and thereby elude your convention act : your laws, liberties, and religion, which have hitherto gone hand in hand, would be separated and disjointed, and one would not long survive the other. But in truth, Sir, this has been by no means a religious contest.—The scruples of the Catholics were in the gradual progress of accommodation to the forms of the constitution, of whose power they desired to participate, and to the sentiments of the legislature, to whose liberality they had been grateful.

The subtle poison of that democratic phrenzy which infected neighbouring countries, unhappily interrupted the salutary effect of your councils.—The statute of 1793 had, with a magnanimity unknown in this country for a century, enacted, that Roman Catholics should not from thenceforth be liable to any forfeiture, disability, or penalty, save such as his Majesty's subjects of the Protestant religion are subject to. And it took off restraints which then affected, and still affect, other of his Majesty's subjects.—The assertion then, that the Roman Catholic was a degraded slave, was the result of presumptuous ignorance, or audacious falsehood. But since the beginning of the French revolution, a new power has been erected in this country by cabals, committees, councils, and meetings, which for a time bearded parliament itself. It appeared principally in that body of men, whose wrath I myself incurred in view of this assembly, for an affront offered to the omnipotence of the United Irishmen—those United Irishmen took upon them the management of the Roman Catholic cause—their publications were bound up with those of the Catholic committee—they appeared in armed array, with all the insignia of rebellion, with French names and French devices, parading the streets of Dublin—and it has in the end turned out as I said in this assembly, that nothing less than *high treason* was hatching, and their plan has ended in the fate of that man who was buried yesterday with all the honours of *high treason*, attended by the leaders of that very society.—By the manliness and wisdom of Lord Westmoreland's council's these attempts were checked—an appeal was made to the honour and spirit of Ireland : I call upon you to imitate that manliness and wisdom, and with perfect philanthropy and steady firmness support the constitution.—Though this is the first time parliament has discussed this question, it has been discussed before in other places.—Give me leave to say, that you are called upon to assert your own consequence.—The insolence with which it has been attempted to overawe your free discussions, has been arrogant as it was mischievous ; but however a short lived power may have been abused, however the loyalty of the Catholics may have been defamed, when it has been rashly asserted, that their claims were only to be controled by arms,

arms, I trust that the spirit of your decision, and the loyalty of the people's deportment, will refute the wanton calumny against both.—I will not allude to certain publications, or speak of any great character not now in the country ; the letters attributed to him, and which do less honour to him than they do to me, I have every reason to hope are not authentic—it is a subject I shall not dwell upon ; but I will conclude by saying, that I trust the gentlemen of Ireland will prove that they are not affected by noise and clamour, but when the constitution is attacked, that they will say with the bold Barons, *Nolumus leges Angliae mutari.*—I move that this bill be rejected.

Right Hon. D. BROWNE said, he was sorry he was not in the house when the Hon. Gentleman began the statement with which he prefaced his motion. The Hon. Gentleman had stated a resolution of the Commons of England in the reign of William and Mary ; that resolution probably suited those times—it has nothing to do with the question before you : it is not from the situation of the Catholics, in 1690, you are to reason, but from their situation in 1795. I agree with the Hon. Gentleman, that that resolution is not to be argued as if a large proportion of our fellow-subjects were slaves ; no, Sir, the Catholics of Ireland have great and valuable privileges, dear to them, and beneficial to the State ; the question simply turned on this—is it necessary you should remove the restrictions on the Catholics (for penal laws there are none) to complete your concessions ; or, should you stop where you are for the security of your establishment?—As shortly as I can, Sir, I will state to you the opinions I have formed on this subject : I owe the statement to my constituents and to myself. The policy of the Legislature in 1778 allowed the Catholics to acquire property in Ireland ; if it were necessary to keep them in political subservience, you should not have granted them that privilege, because property and political subservience are not compatible with each other. The concessions of 1793 followed the concessions of 1778 ; as of course you admitted the Catholics fully to the constituent body of the State ; you opened to them the profession of the law with the exception of office of King's Counsel and Judges of the land ; you admitted them to your army, to the rank and command of regiments, but you refused them the rank of General ; you gave them the power of holding Revenue Offices, except the office of Commissioner : with this grant of privileges, the most liberal that has been made to the subject since the period of Magna Charta, you blended a refusal of the power of sitting in either House of Parliament. This is precisely the political situation of the Catholics of Ireland. The bill of the Right Hon. Gentleman goes to remove those restrictions and disabilities : If it shall appear that they are not necessary for the security of the establishment, they ought not to remain, because strong necessity alone can justify political disabilities, because such are incompatible with that national concord and collective industry that can alone advance the prosperity of a State, because they are causes of disunion always operating injuriously and always finally conceded : but, Sir, if it should appear that your grants, as they

they stand, are incompatible with your restriction, and even dangerous to the State without removing the restriction, there will be little doubt that they should not remain for a moment on the face of your statutes. This is the strong point of view in which this question presses on my mind. The Catholic has the power of voting for Members of Parliament, but he cannot be a Member of Parliament himself. It was urged against this concession, that it would make the Catholics, from their numbers, the constituent body of the state: If this be the case what have you done by your law? you have created separate interests between the constituent and the legislative body; the Catholic will be able to find a profligate Protestant, whose only merit with him will be enmity to your establishment; thus you would have the constituent body warring with the state, instead of being, as they should be, an integral part of it: you give them the gradations of the army up to the rank of Colonels of regiments, but you refuse the power of being Generals and of heading your armies. Do you think military ambition will stop in the Catholic just where you wish it? no, when you have trained him to arms, with the knowledge of your soldiery and your country, he will leave your service, and he may command against you; either he will be an efficient officer, or he will have military ambition—in the one case he is useless, and in the other dangerous. You allow the Catholic the profession of the law, and you refuse him the power of advancement. Study makes him informed, and professional exertion makes him eloquent; you refuse to suffer the information and the eloquence that your law has created to be used for the support of the constitution, therefore it will be turned against it; you will have him the eloquent advocate of the traitor, because he cannot be the servant of the State. If it was necessary to grant the indulgence of holding revenue employments to the Catholics, and yet to prevent their having influence in that profession, you mistook in what you gave and in what you refused; you should have allowed them to be commissioners, and refused their being guagers, for it is the inferior revenue officer that has influence, not the Commissioner. The dangers I have heard urged in private conversation and in debate, that would arise to the establishment by allowing the Roman Catholics to sit in Parliament, and be Judges of the land, the repeal of which are the principal features of this bill, appear to me to be wholly unfounded; the apprehension is, if you admit the power of the Catholic being elected to Parliament, from their numbers they will become the majority of the Parliament, and overturn the Protestant Establishment in church and state—not as the Parliament is considered now; 64 members are returned for counties, the remaining 236 for close boroughs and free cities; the landed property in the counties is as forty-nine to one in the hands of the Protestants. How many counties of Ireland would return Roman Catholics merely for their religion? Is it supposed that in those days religion has more weight than property in the close boroughs? Their religion, we all know, would not make much way for them in the free cities of the kingdom, which form a very considerable

siderable part of the representation. This principle might at first have some weight; I will not pretend to ascertain, as the constitution or parliament stands now, how many Roman Catholics would get into parliament; but the number would be certainly so small as to make fear from their power ridiculous. It may be admitted that this would be the case as Parliament stands now, but that the Catholic influence would force what is called a reform in parliament, and then, from their numbers, they would be the parliament:— See how this probability stands. The only change that could be in the constitution of parliament, would be taking the representation from the close boroughs and giving it to the counties in some shape or other; in such a case it would be more difficult for the Catholic to come into Parliament than as the constituent body stands now, for in such a change the return would be thrown entirely from the monied and commercial interest to the landed property, which the Catholics have so small a portion of. According to the present system of representation, ability and money would weigh wherever in the constituent body there was neither ambition or avarice; an able and an informed Catholic would be preferred to a stupid Protestant, a rich Roman Catholic would be preferred to a poor Protestant; but in county representation it would be no such thing, landed interest and connexion alone would weigh. As to the danger of their changing the church establishment for their own, according to the premises I have laid down they would not have the power of doing it; if it was merely to change one church establishment for another, if they had the power, I do not think they would feel that individual interest that has operated on them in the exertions they have made and are making; and if they would pull down the church establishment with the view of pulling down all ecclesiastical establishments, then they have not the strong religious prejudices that we are told so much is to be feared from.—Now, Sir, as to the last, and I must own not the least important part of this consideration, whether the present temper of the times is not against the changes? whether a State ought ever to yield to threats or to violence? I know it should not; I know that such conduct is unsafe either for bodies politic or individuals; and could I connect the Catholic cause with either the threats of Dublin, or the insurrections of the country, I would think that the measure, however necessary and right in itself, was inexpedient at present; but, Sir, I deny the connexion between the Catholics of the kingdom and the sedition of Dublin; I assert that the insurrections of the country are no way connected with this question: the object is plunder and property; passing this bill would not stop it, refusing it would not increase it. I consider this to be a measure for the general advantage of the constitution, and for the special benefit of the Catholic nobility and gentry: their humble advocate I am proud to be, because I know them, because I think that, dealt with wisely and liberally, they would be supporters of your constitution, as they ever have been; they would have no interest in a change, and they would not consequently wish for it; if you wish to separate them from

from the ill-affected, it is practicable, by removing the distinction. The turbulent and the seditious are only heard of in agitations—in tranquillity they are forgot and despised. To conclude, Sir, what is asked, in my mind, should be granted as material to the union, peace, and well being of the kingdom, as right in itself and expedient.

Lord KINGSBOROUGH.—It was my wish to second the hon. gentleman's motion, and to give a few reasons for my conduct. This bill is to take the power from the Protestants to give it to Catholics. For nineteen years that I have sat in Parliament, I have voted for every indulgence being granted to the Catholics except the elective franchise, to which I objected upon account of its conferring political power: I have been a steady friend to the Catholics; but I never would give up the Protestant interest, or take any step to destroy the Church of Ireland. I own, Sir, that the conduct of many of the Catholics has been such of late as not to encourage any man to grant them any further concessions: not that I mean to cast reflections upon the whole body, for I have the honor of being acquainted with many Catholics of the most reputable character, and who would be an ornament to any nation; but of late the country has been disturbed, and I think those disturbances arise from the conduct of persons belonging to the Catholic committee; I allude particularly to their clubs and meetings, and to a circular letter of Mr. Edward Byrne, about two years ago, informing the Catholics, "that they were to be turned out of their farms to make room for Protestants," so great was the spirit of electioneering. The poor people in Connaught, thus deceived, in order to prevent this, attacked the Protestants, robbed them of their arms, plundered and murdered them. In the South, some disturbance took place on the same account; some of the rioters acknowledged, that persons had come from Dublin swearing them to rise and punish the Protestants for *intending* to turn them out of their farms.—The United Irishmen, and the Catholic committee, who are, I believe, one and the same body, joined in exciting mischief in the country, by publications and speeches endeavouring to raise rebellion. What was their language in Francis-street chapel?—“to separate the two countries—that Ireland, but for the British connexion, would be happy, and of some consequence in the world,” &c. They called on the soldiers to desert their King and country and support them! When the common people hear such language from those from whom they expect truth, is their conduct surprising? I have attended the Assizes in some of the disturbed counties, and I have there become acquainted with some of the efforts used to inflame the minds of the people, by hand-bills and emissaries sent down for the purpose, informing them of grievous taxes which were to be laid on that never existed but in those publications, and in the minds of those incendiaries—(the committee-men and the United Irishmen) who framed them. These are the causes of the disturbances.—I should be sorry to give up the power of the Protestants to such attempts to bully the legislature—I would cheerfully

cheerfully lose my life and property in support of the constitution in church and state—and I do not desire to live longer than they continue to exist.

Mr. COOTE expressed his anxiety to have seconded the motion to reject the bill, and that he was equally gratified that it was seconded by his noble friend (Lord Kingsborough) than whom no person felt a more animated zeal for the good of the country.—He implored the House to pause, and to well weigh the consequences of giving to the Roman Catholics the power and government of the country: he wished to have the advantage of experiencing the effects of what has been given, before more is conceded; if concession upon concession, and favour heaped upon favour, have failed to give content and satisfaction, he was convinced the present bill would not do it; on the contrary, it would produce new demands, and such as would, if ever surrendered, completely annihilate the constitution. They will first call for a reform in Parliament, and unless this shall be conceded, the bill will give them but an empty and delusive benefit: they will expect a support and establishment for their clergy, which it might be good policy and wisdom to give, if it can be given without doing mischief to the Protestant church establishment; but will the House ever consent that their Bishops shall sit in the other House of Parliament—a demand that will grow out of the present bill? He therefore thought the bill to be the source of endless jealousies and discord.—He hoped the time would never arrive, when Catholic power should govern Ireland—if it should, there will soon follow a separation between the two kingdoms: Great Britain and Ireland must separate, because a Protestant government in England, and a Catholic one in Ireland can never co-operate, or act in union and harmony. He therefore warmly and earnestly called upon those, who wished to preserve the connexion between the two countries, and who felt that Great Britain and Ireland should stand and fall together, to reject this bill. He cordially wished to the Roman Catholics the enjoyment of every comfort and happiness; and this they now had—for, Mr. Speaker, authority like yours, could best tell the Catholics of Ireland that they have at this hour equal liberty, equal peace, and equal security with the Protestant. The question at this moment is clearly, whether we shall continue to be a part of the British Empire, or whether we shall be a Roman Catholic people and government? Compare the style and manner of the petitions before us, with that of the petition presented in the year 1776—that petition, signed by the most respectable and richest Catholics in Ireland, intreated a mitigation of the penal laws from his Majesty, and from Parliament, as a favour, and not as a right: there now is introduced into their petitions, a word and a manner that ought to rouse the House to reject this bill; and he dwelt much on their new-adopted word—*Restore*—and declared, that if we *restored* rights and functions upon petitions so constructed, and so worded, upon what principle shall we hereafter refuse to *restore* lands and estates?—That this new form and style of their petitions ought

ought to awaken our vigilance: why do they preserve schedules and records of property? and that a map he had in his hand, which marked out the names of the old proprietors of property, ought to convince us why they do preserve them.—He read from a volume of Parliamentary debates, the objections that had been made to the Catholic bill in the year 1792, by a respectable member of great character and ability (Mr. G. Ponsonby)—“ That bill did not please him, because the measure was not glanced at in the Lord Lieutenant’s speech, nor any communication on the subject made to the gentlemen of the country.” That there appeared some inconsistency in the conduct of gentlemen, in and out of power; for who were they who had been consulted before this measure was moved this session? They were the Catholics of Ireland, and not the House of Commons, or those who ought to have been consulted. He was therefore most decidedly against this bill, and would have opposed it with the same warmth under the last, as under the present government, as being replete with danger and destruction to the constitution, and as leading to the greatest of misfortunes, a separation between Great Britain and Ireland.

Mr. M. FITZGERALD said he would state as shortly as possible, a few reasons which induced him to support the bill, and as he wished to give his support from the justice of the cause, and not from the abilities of its advocates, he wished thus to precede those gentlemen whose talents would that night illustrate the subject. He had heard, he said, no argument against the bill which had made any degree of impression on his mind; but the general tendency of what had been said, appeared to him reducible to the probable danger which this bill would occasion to our political institutions and our religious establishment, by the admission of persons professing heresy. He would not consider the catholics as they stood at the time of a disputed succession, but as they were now entitled to legislative favour by their loyalty. As to the political institutions, he thought they would be as safe in the hands of the catholics as those of any other set of men; they had the same attachment to liberty and the blessings of a free constitution as protestants had. As to our religious establishment, no man was more ardent than he felt himself in defence of it; and as he felt the fears, with respect to its danger, most strongly, so was he most anxious to remove this objection: the catholics were too enlightened, their loyalty too steady, and their attachment too well tried, to suppose that they would seek to destroy that religion, which would, in its overthrow, involve our civil liberties; and if their clergy should be so ambitious as to desire its overthrow, he was sure they would meet no assistance from the laity; but their clergy would not desire it, for they well knew that this was no day for any unusual aggrandizement of church establishments, and that the utmost they could do was to preserve themselves by the mildness of their administration; and though he had heard it said that they desire to sit upon the episcopal bench in the house of peers, he had never heard from the catholics any thing but a complete disavowal of any such expectation;

pectation; and he believed, that amongst their enlightened clergy there was a very strong reason for this conduct—that they would not wish to hazard the maintenance and support provided for them by a very meritorious bill now before the house, (Mr. Pelham's bill) to forward any project of ambitious aggrandizement.—Mr. Fitzgerald then proceeded to state the conduct of the catholics from their first relaxation in 1791, to their present application; and concluded his speech, by declaring his opposition to the motion for rejecting the bill.

Sir H. LANGRISHE said this was a question of such magnitude, one which had so many years engaged his thoughts and employed his exertions, that he could not remain silent, when it was offered to the consideration of parliament; at the same time he felt a painful anxiety, lest what he should take the liberty to submit to the House might not be altogether conformable to the sentiments of those, from whom personally, or politically, whether he considered their private qualities or their public principles, he must feel it a misfortune to differ upon any occasion.

However, not only the importance of the measure itself, but the variety of sentiment it has excited, renders it necessary that we should meet it with a full and free discussion; and, I think, said he, the more we examine it with temper and impartiality, the more we communicate our thoughts upon it, without yielding implicitly to the dominions of ancient prepossession on one side, or without suffering our minds to be alienated from the general question, by the presumptuous phrase of intimidation, assumed by a few deluded, if not disaffected, men, on the other.—The more, I say, we consider this measure detached from every thing that can tend to inflame passion, or revive prejudice; the more, in my opinion, we shall discover, that the apprehensions entertained concerning it are imaginary, and the objections to be unfounded. Whatever may be the determination of parliament at the present juncture; if the Roman Catholics persevere in their former good conduct; if they are not seduced from their interests and their duty, by the impulse of their passions, or the artifice of designing men, I do not entertain a doubt in my mind of the ultimate accomplishment of what I ardently wish, “That all those religious discriminations, which have so long divided, and so often disturbed this country, should be utterly abolished.” But I do not find the confidence of my hopes in any powers of coercion—God forbid!—The notion of the coercion of parliament, and the subversion of the state, is one and the same idea. I would rather cast from my mind every fond prepossession in favour of any part of the community, than become an accessory in the destruction of the whole. Rather abandon any measure, however salutary; however congenial to the constitution, than see it pursued by means tending to its subversion.

My reliance for success is founded in the force of reason; the persuasion of policy; the growth of benevolence; and the extinction of prejudice. I look for success to the persevering loyalty of the Catholic, and experienced liberality of the Protestant;—I look to

to the benignity of a gracious sovereign, and the wisdom of a parliament that have granted so much already.

As to the general system of the Popery laws, so long as I have been able to form an opinion on any public subject, they have appeared to me to be neither sound in policy, nor justified in principle; inconsistent with the spirit of equal benefit and equal controul, which is the perfection of all human government, and the peculiar pride of our happy constitution; and if my humble efforts in their mitigation have at any time been limited in their extent; if they did not at all times satisfy the impatience of pursuit, it was because I thought it necessary to compromise with the temper of the times; to consult conciliation rather than contest; accommodation rather than achievement; for I always thought (and I think so still) that we should assimilate, in order to incorporate; and that concession and conciliation should go hand in hand; and therefore, Sir, when the Roman Catholics come forward, under the title of loyalty and obedience to the laws, to solicit a participation of common privilege and common condition, it is with no small degree of indignation that I see any part of their body, however small, however inconsiderable, betrayed into an intemperance, that may appear to justify their former opponents, or tend to alienate their old friends; if not to alienate, to render them impotent in their service. For myself, I declare, if I thought some of their recent publications were a faithful representation of their principles or their purposes; if I were not convinced that that is not the fact, I should not think myself justified in standing up their advocate at this day; but I am convinced they have been traduced by some of their orators and some of their historians, and under that conviction, and that only I act.

Certainly, Sir, the laws, so far as is consistent with subordination and the order of good government, should, in their operation, be equal and indifferent; if possible, like the sun, they should "shine upon all alike." However, where there had been a long privation of light, prudence required that the restoration of it should be administered by gradual proportions, otherwise it might operate rather to dazzle than to direct; rather to wound the organ, than illuminate the object.

But after 80 years of general enforcement, and 20 years of gradual relaxation, it is reasonable that we should consider at least with a temperate mind, whether any just cause subsists which should induce us to retain even a remnant of this system.

At the same time that I express (as I have always done) my disapprobation of these laws, it is but just that we should look to their origin, as well as their operation, in which view, although I disapprove the principle, I cannot censure or animadvert on our ancestors for having adopted them. There was something singular and critical in the conjuncture that pressed forcibly on the temper and condition of their time, which was their apology, if not their justification.

The unfortunate monarch, James II. who paid the forfeit of his crown to the laws and constitution which he had violated, was strongly impelled to this violation by his devotion to the Roman Catholic religion. He sacrificed the laws on the altar of his faith.

When he abdicated the crown of England—when another monarch was placed on the throne there—and when, by the laws of Ireland, he was no longer king of Ireland, he came over to this country, where the majority of the people being Catholic, either forgot that he was no king, or embraced him as a martyr. They flew to his standard, forgetting in the sympathies of their faith, the conditions of their allegiance.

In the subsequent successes of king William, great landed forfeitures ensued, which forfeitures were undoubtedly founded in justice and the laws of the country; because, as the statute of Henry the Eighth (and a happy statute it was for Ireland) declared the king of England *ipso facto* king of Ireland; the adherents in arms to any other person, in opposition to that title, were guilty of treason, and subject to the penalties of forfeiture.

Thus our laws pronounce on the forfeitures by reason of the rebellion of 1688.

But the animosities natural between the victorious and the vanquished—between those who had relinquished and those who had acquired, must have been acrimonious; and the laws that were made at that period, were not only composed in the temper of that controversy; but they were calculated to defend these forfeitures from the majority of the people, by rendering the majority of the people impotent in the state.

This is the impartial story of those laws.

Whether our ancestors were justifiable or not in the extent of these prohibitions; whether the spirit of legislation exalted or degraded itself by thus rigidly retaliating on the violators of the old Laws; whether the law, that had been trampled upon by James, should, in the reign of William and of Anne, like a wounded serpent, have turned back on its assailants, with such a poisonous malignity.—Whether these proceedings were justifiable or not, we are not called upon at this day to determine; but we are called upon, as rational and dispassionate men, to consider whether in justice, in policy, in the public prosperity, we can trace any good cause for persevering in this system, or any part of it; and in this investigation, we should not be influenced by the heated imagination of a Bishop King on one side, nor the inflammatory declamations of a modern democracy on the other.

I remember, about 30 years ago, we first began in parliament to question the justice and the policy of those laws; our efforts were then unsuccessful; but we sowed the seeds that have been since so happily productive.

The concessions to the Catholics in 1774, 1778, 1782, 1792 and 1793, are well known to you, and, I trust, they live in the remembrance of the Roman Catholics.

Having,

Having, in the first place, granted them a power to confirm by the authority of an oath, that allegiance which their conduct had proved for near a century; you restored them "to the acquisition and enjoyment of all personal property, and to the exercise of their religion." Then to "the rights of purchase and inheritance in fee-simple; to the exercise of learned and lucrative professions; to the benefits of education and the endearments of intermarriage; and, finally, to a share in the administration of the state, by the exercise of the elective franchise, and a capacity to hold all offices, civil and military, under the crown, subject only to a few exceptions."

This is your career of concession! and, I must say, it was a great and magnanimous sacrifice of ancient prejudices and exclusive rights, to general benevolence and national prosperity.

What now remains as the object of further concession? Little indeed! Nothing but to repeal the few exceptions in your former grants; those provisoës limiting in extent the operation of principles, which you have already decided;—nothing but to offer a pledge of confidence to the aristocracy of the Roman Catholics, by restoring the full exercise of that power, which should be inseparable from the property you have already given; and which property is an hostage for the due exercise of the power it confers.

To suppose that men who enjoy every thing under the state, will combine against the state, is an irrational presumption; and to give men property, without giving them the power naturally attached to it, is as absurd as to give them the enjoyment of the sun, and endeavour to preclude them from its light or its warmth.

The Roman Catholics have acquired considerable property; they have a great proportion and proprietorship in the island; and are therefore bound by every motive that can affect the principles or the passions of men, to the prosperity of the country, and the stability of its government. Besides, permit me to observe, that amongst the propensities universally attributed to their tenets, a devotion to hereditary monarchy has always been considered as predominant. To this, perhaps, of old, they owed their misfortunes; to this, in the present time, they may look for a restitution to their station in the country.

That we should by common rights and common interests; by equal laws and equal protection, engage every member of the community in the protection of the whole, is a maxim so sound in policy, and conformable to constitution, that any deviation from it can only be justified or accounted for by some pressing necessity indeed.

The existence of that necessity in the present instance, has, I do confess, been urged with much weight by men of great consideration, great abilities, and great liberality of mind.

But how justly soever we may respect their arguments, we are bound to examine them; how highly soever we may estimate their opinions, it is upon *our own* that we must act; and, for myself, I must say, I can discover no such necessity.

We have been told, "that the exercise of a Catholic power in the state is incompatible with, and must be subversive of, a Protestant establishment."

That I deny ! The establishment formed at the Revolution, was an establishment for the *whole empire*, consisting of ten or twelve millions of people, the great majority of which were Protestant. Its basis therefore was a Protestant King, a Protestant Church, and the King at the head of that Church. And however independent this country is, and ought to be in the powers of legislation, it is inseparably united to England, by the bonds of a common sovereign, who is bound by the most sacred obligations to maintain this establishment. Now, Sir, I say, the Irish Catholics united have not the power (and your liberality has not left them a temptation) to overturn this great palladium of your constitution; this fundamental principle of the Revolution. The connexion between Great Britain and Ireland, which hangs upon this, is so essential to both, that its dissolution would be the extinction of both. The Catholic creed does not go to these objects !

The Catholics swear, "that the Pope of Rome has no temporal jurisdiction within this realm,"—and they have never denied, that there is an established church, and that the king is head of the established church.

As for themselves, they admit their reference to a foreign prelate on articles of faith, and the discipline of their worship; but that such is paramount to their civil obligations;—that it can dispense with oaths, absolve allegiance, or cancel faith with heretics, they utterly deny, on the solemnity of their oaths; a sanctimonious reverence for which has been the sole foundation of their past disqualifications. If the authority of their oaths were not conclusive on them; if they could be dispensed with, they need not solicit the bill now before you.—The oaths that attach them to the established government and the state are as strong as our own.

They swear "Allegiance to the King, and to maintain the succession in his family.

" That they detest and abjure the doctrine, that it is lawful to injure any man under pretence of being an heretick.

" They disclaim the infallibility of the Pope, and his power to remit sins, or absolve them from their allegiance.

" They solemnly abjure any intention to subvert the present church established, for the purpose of substituting a Catholic establishment in its stead."

And they swear "they will not exercise any privilege to which they are or may become entitled, to disturb or weaken the Protestant religion and Protestant government in this kingdom."

The most jealous state that ever existed, could not require a stricter conformity to the principles of its establishment, than what I have recited.

In times of ancient darkness, when pontifical ambition could look to general dominion, the decretals of councils, and the dispensations of the church were, I do admit, employed as the delusions of

of popular ignorance, and the instruments of temporal power. Great calamities followed from the controversies that ensued; and, I must say, all religions, when from ambitious motives they are led under the banners of bigotry, are almost equally cruel. Calvin burned Servetus at Geneva; Queen Mary burned Cranmer at London—even the mild Bramins on the coast of Coromandel murdered St. Thomas at his devotion; because, by the force of his girdle, he removed a great beam that obstructed the harbour of Meliopore; by which miracle he converted to Christianity Sagamo their king, and thereby shook the foundation of their professional power.

But in the present temper and condition of the world, apprehensions from the spiritual supremacy of the Pope, appear, to my understanding, but as the dreams of prejudice, and the ancient decretals of councils, which we have heard so much of, like the Sybil's leaves of old, are now scattered about by the winds, and no man is found ignorant enough to gather them up.

The Pope of Rome is an inoffensive unaspiring prince—endeavouring (and I hope his endeavours will be crowned with success) to maintain the permanency of his little temporal dominions, from the rapacity and infidelity of his neighbours; and, in my mind, the references of the Catholics to him at this day on the articles of their faith, or the ceremonies of their worship, no more concern the government of the country, than the different states of ancient Greece were affected by the various journeys of their several people to consult the oracle of Apollo in the island of Delphos.

Our statute laws against appeals to Rome; the statute against provisors; the act of faculties, and such like, were made upon a different occasion, and for a different object.

Before the reformation, when the several states of Europe were unsettled, and subject to frequent convulsions; it was the custom of the times for the different monarchs to appeal to the decision of the Pope of Rome, sometimes against each other, sometimes against their own subjects, and sometimes for their subjects to appeal against them. This practice, favoured by the blind zeal of the times, threw a power into the hands of an aspiring prelate, formidable to every state in Christendom.—To resist which evil in these countries, the reformation took place; and these statutes were wisely made “to prevent appeals to Rome against the king, or without his licence (as it is specifically expressed) to guard the prerogative of the king, as head of the church.”

But when the papal power became circumscribed, and superstition extinct, the object of these laws became extinct, and cannot at this day be construed to go to references on cases of conscience, on articles of faith, or the rituals of any tolerated religion.—But I have heard it said “the Catholics of Ireland differ from the Catholics of every other country.”

Upon what ground that assertion is made I cannot conceive, unless it be that “some of their ancestors, attached to a Catholic prince, forfeited their estates, which they wish to get back again.” Now even this circumstance is not peculiar to Ireland; the landed property

property of almost every country in Europe is forfeited land, acquired by the victorious from the vanquished, and by the former divided amongst their adherents.

But as to the notion of reclaiming these lands in Ireland, of recovering them for the descendants of those who had forfeited them 150 or 100 years ago ; which descendants are not at this day to be traced through the mendicancy of the country ; and that, by dispossessing those whose length of possession for above a century, is in itself a better title than those who forfeited could probably adduce (they could not have had a better) ;—and which forfeited lands are at this day, by purchase, become a great part of the wealth of the Catholics themselves.—I say, such a notion is a vision of too baseless a fabrick for any young man to see, or old man to dream.

No, no, Sir, the Catholics of Ireland know (what every man in the world must know) that if, in our evil destiny, this country were to be conquered from its connection with England ; our lands would not be the endowment of the ancient proprietor or his descendant, but the plunder of the foreign adventurer. We might then say, with the Roman Shepherd, “*Ob! barbarus miles hoc habebit.*”

And as to the notion of their attachment to a Roman Catholic prince, that is a matter out of all calculation or debate. The object of that attachment is at an end ; the family is extinct, except in the person of an old cardinal, whose sacred profession, and extreme age, preclude all possibility of a successor.

I shall only trespass further on your patience, to observe upon one argument more, which I have heard on this subject.

It has been said, “that a parliamentary reform (as it is called) must be the consequence of your agreeing to this bill.”—If I could foresee such a consequence ; if I could be persuaded that this measure would be auxiliary to that tremendous notion of innovation ; that rash experiment on established rights, and settled happiness ; that delusive project of a representation, unknown to our constitution, and subversive of its principles.—If I could consider this measure as conducing to such an event, I would not hesitate a moment to give it my decided opposition.

But I cannot see how admitting some of the Roman Catholic aristocracy into the foremost ranks of the constitution, should inspire them with a wish to alter or to subvert it. If the Roman Catholic gentlemen were admitted to an equal capacity of sitting in parliament with the Protestant, I cannot see what should induce a discrimination of sentiment between them concerning this subject ; but if they were to be deluded into such an enterprise, their energy would be lost. When the Roman Catholics, under the title of their loyalty and submission to the laws, solicit to be received into the bosom of the constitution, they have great weight from the reasonableness of their pretensions ; but if afterwards they were to come forward, desiring that the constitution, which had just embraced them, should be altered, or accommodated to their fancy ; their

their demand would be so unjustifiable, that, with all their numbers, they would be impotent.

I know very well that some men, more devoted to turbulence than toleration, have, by a suspicious connection affected to make common cause with the Roman Catholics, in order to apply the authority of their numbers, and of the justness of their cause, to their own dangerous projects. I know very well too; that in the great body of the Catholics themselves, some may be found of such a turbulent spirit, as concession would not conciliate, as privilege would not satisfy, or tranquillity delight; but in the former instance, the artifice is too obvious to be dangerous; in the latter, it would be unfair to judge the many for the crimes of the few.

I have addressed myself to every argument which has occurred to me; and I have expressed my sentiments with impartiality at least on this great subject.

I cannot be alarmed by dangers that have long since passed away, nor will I combat superstitions, which I know are obsolete. We have nothing to fear from the people; we have already placed them in such a situation, as that they must perceive (if they are not blind to the condition of the world) that no political alteration can improve their condition; that no part of the terraqueous globe can furnish them with so good or happy a government as their own.—As an enthusiast to the English constitution, I would pursue the spirit of equal benefit and equal controul, that rational principle of English equality, to the utmost extent of speculation; that the people may be led, by the comparison, the more to detest the equality of the French democracy; to which, if they turn their eyes, they will see not equal rights, but equal wrongs—an equality, not of property, but of poverty. There is not a man in France, nor in any country which they have conciliated or conquered, whom it has not impoverished; the rich are plundered, and the poor are not enriched; the fountains are dried up that used to supply the wages of industry; the speculations of commerce; the recompence of industry; or, the endowment of genius. The common beggar has lost his inheritance in the bounty of the affluent; the whole is general depression, universal degradation.

It is as if the lofty mountains and aspiring cliffs were to stoop their heads, to be tumbled into the vallies; it would make the face of the earth level—but it would be a level of sterility; no more diversified by alternate production and shelter. I will not say, with the poet, “the cloud-cap'd towers, and gorgeous palaces, the solemn temples are dissolved,” but they are fallen! as if by their prostration to overwhelm the land they were accustomed to shelter and to adorn.

I beg pardon, Sir!—I cannot touch on this barbarous romance without emotion, nor can I avoid touching on it when it falls in my way. I would refer this contrast to the contemplation of my countrymen; but their own good sense must have anticipated me.

The present bill goes still further to display the contrast; to illustrate

lustrate the discrimination ; and if I had no other reason, I would agree to it on that account.

I think it inoffensive to the establishment in church and state, as settled at the revolution ; and it is recommended by this peculiarity, " that it would give satisfaction many years before it can come into operation."

Mr. RUXTON spoke a few words in favour of the bill.

Rt. Hon. Mr. PELHAM. Mr. Speaker, I shall endeavour to follow the example, and attend to the recommendation of the right hon. Baronet near me, by a cool and dispassionate investigation of the question before us; for I confess, Sir, that I entertain no other feelings upon this subject, than such as arise from that zeal and animation which are inseparable from warm and sincere attachment to the constitution in church and state, in defence of which I am willing to join with a noble lord behind me, to spill the last drop of my blood, and spend the last shilling of my fortune, though I am aware that the last pledge may be considered as falling very short of what has been offered by him.

I am desirous of offering myself to your attention, and that of the house, before the impression, which the speech of the right hon. baronet may have made, is done away. But before I enter upon the question at large, I must congratulate the house and the country, upon the display of talents which appeared in the honourable member (Mr. Fitzgerald) who preceded him. They are such as reflect honour upon him and upon those he represents, and I trust, that by a frequent exertion, the public will reap the full advantage of them. But, Sir, as the hon. gentleman is lately come into parliament, he will excuse me if I address a few words to him by way of caution upon this subject. He has considered and argued the question with the ingenuousness that characterizes youth, and he naturally wishes that those who have assisted him in acquiring that privilege and honour he now enjoys, should be in a situation of being admitted to the same honour, and he is confident that they will defend the constitution with the same zeal that he entertains himself. Sir, he will allow me to represent to him the danger of conceding upon a principle of conciliation, and of giving too much credit to the notion of preventing future, by granting the present demands; I might request him to take experience from our own time, and consult the history of his country, or if I state to him an hypothetical case which he may find not totally without precedent in the annals of parliament, it will not be altogether unworthy of his attention.

If in his researches he was to find, that a venerable and respected member of parliament, who could state that he had been above thirty years a friend to the Roman Catholics, and consequently could speak with a degree of authority as to their opinions and intentions, which few or none but himself could pretend to, should say upon an occasion similar to the present, that any thing that touched

touched upon, the constitution must be resisted, that even to them, (meaning the catholics) the principles of the constitution could not be given up ; and that rather than endanger that constitution, under which we all derived so much happiness and such solid advantages, he would persist in those restrictions, the repeal of which he now joined in demanding. If, Sir, I say, he should find a person such as I have described, who after such pointed and positive declarations, should in the course of two short years be drawn into a belief, that the concessions which he had shewn to be safe, were merely a prelude to such as were dangerous, and that former measures consistent with our security, were merely a step to other measures, which must break in upon that constitution he had so strenuously defended from all encroachment; ought not the hon. member to feel some alarm at the confidence he has entertained for the future security of the constitution after the passing of this bill ? I am sure that, possessing those talents we have with so much pleasure seen displayed this night, he will not think me unfriendly to him, if I wish to prevent those talents being hampered by improvident pledges, or being betrayed into assurances, which the most experienced have not been able to maintain.

I wish most sincerely that this question should be fully and fairly investigated, because I am anxious that the decision which this house may form to-night, may give satisfaction to protestant and catholic, by convincing them that it has been deliberate and well founded.

I shall not enter into the detail of the different clauses of the bill; but meet the question fairly upon broad constitutional grounds; and Sir, I say, that the oaths of allegiance and supremacy, and the declarations accompanying them, cannot be dispensed with without an infringement of the constitution as established at the revolution, and endangering the protestant church establishment, which formed a principal and integral part of that constitution.

If you admit the Catholics into the legislature, you must do more, you cannot stop there; and I ask the house whether they are prepared to introduce a popish in the room of a protestant church establishment. For myself I am free to say, that if the parliament in political power becomes catholic, the church establishment ought to be of the same persuasion. We are not at the moment when we can properly decide which of the two persuasions is best; though I am free to say I have my partialities, and I am not ashamed of owning, even in this philosophic age, the principles of my faith, of acknowledging my attachment to christianity, and my persuasion that the protestant profession is the best. There are men, I know, who think lightly of establishments, and say that no inconvenience would arise from the admission of the papists into parliament, because they acknowledge that the division of the church revenues which would be the necessary consequence, would be no disadvantage; and they are ready to admit what must inevitably follow, that all establishment would soon decay, because if two existed, men would

would contribute to neither, and they would be probably in that state of variance which would make them destroy each other.

Sir, I must acknowledge that these discussions are not entirely new to me, for long before I had any notion of having the honour of standing in the situation I now do, entertaining as I always must, an anxiety about every thing relating to this country, I had conversed upon this subject with a person, whose comprehensive mind, and transcendent abilities, could foresee and meet every difficulty, and although I had the misfortune of differing with him upon this subject, I had some consolation in finding that he was driven to the necessity of admitting, that this concession would end in a participation of establishment, and that this participation would ultimately destroy the establishment: a predicament indeed that gave him no concern, because he was not anxious for any establishment at all, which I believe to be the opinion of many who support this question. But I think it would have been justice in him, as it would be in them, to acknowledge and assert that opinion in the first instance, in order that we might know what were the principles of those with whom we were disputing.

It is improper to admit the Papists or Roman Catholics into either house of parliament, without dispensing with those oaths which were established at the revolution. Consider, therefore, and let us examine for a moment how they stand, and how they are framed. It has been admitted by the best historians and the wisest politicians of this age, that the great men who established the constitution at the revolution, formed it upon clear and intelligible principles, unincumbered with any unnecessary matter, and thereby made it intelligible to every one. There was nothing superfluous: Although political considerations had their influence in the manner of conducting it, they established only constitutional principles and maxims. A protestant church establishment formed a leading and essential part of that constitution. Protestant predominancy, an expression I have borrowed from a catholic authority, was a distinguishing character of the whole; and the wise men of that time thought it necessary to secure the permanency of their establishment, by requiring oaths and declarations as tests of attachment to it, from those who formed the legislature, and were to fill the offices of high trust in the state. By these means all political power was put into the hands of protestants alone and avowedly so.—The restrictions, penalties and disqualifications, that were afterwards imposed upon papists, originated in the circumstances of the times, and were founded in expediency; the papists were politically connected with the princes of the house of Stuart; in the course of time that family declined, and has now almost disappeared; and the loyalty and attachment to his present Majesty, manifested by the catholics on different occasions, have produced and warranted a relaxation of all those penal statutes, which originated in the circumstances of the times, and were founded, as I have said, in expediency. But this relaxation by no means did, or could induce, or justify an alteration in the constitutional principles of the revolution, or weaken the permanency

manency of the fundamental statutes established for its security. Sir, the catholic and protestant, in regard to security for their persons, characters, and properties, and in regard to civil rights in general, stand at present upon the same footing. I know it has been said, that it is a sophistical statement to represent the catholic and protestant on the same footing, when an oath is required, which it is known a catholic cannot take in order to come into parliament, and I admit the truth of this objection: But you will recollect that it does not apply to civil rights, but to political power; and I avow, Sir, that I mean to exclude the catholic and every dissenter, of whatever description, from that power, who will not give that test of his attachment to the protestant establishment in church and state, which was prescribed at the revolution, and under which, catholic and protestant have both derived such great advantages.

The great and wise men who established the constitution at the revolution, thought these oaths indispensable guards and protections to a protestant establishment, and after an experience of an hundred years, of the blessings derived from it, I am not prepared to give up its outworks.

It has been argued with dexterity, more than with effect, I hope, by the right hon. baronet near me, that we have nothing to fear from the Román Catholics, that their attachment to the Pope is lost, and that they will as readily support the protestant establishment as the protestants themselves. Sir, in the first place, I will not pay the papists in general so bad a compliment as to suppose, that they have not as sincere a preference for their church, as I have for that to which I have the honour to belong, and I can admit without imputation upon any dissenter, that every one would, if he had it in his power, substitute a church congenial to his own persuasion in preference to one to which he could not conform.

But Sir, the right hon. Baronet has thought proper to represent the power of the pope as ridiculous, for the purpose of calming the alarms of the house about their own church; he has represented that potentate in a situation which I cannot hear without regret; not that I have more partiality to the tenets and doctrines of his Holiness, than the right hon. Baronet, but because I see from the means by which his power has been overthrown, that religion is itself in danger.—Besides I am never disposed to trample upon fallen greatness. The effects of the overthrow of the authority of the Pope, however in itself absurd and unjustifiable, are certainly such, as might have been a subject of serious alarm and consideration to every thinking man. The overthrow of his power has not been the effect of enlightened reason, but has been produced by a spirit of atheism supported by political anarchy; and surely, Sir, when we contemplate the miserable situation of France, where there has been a vain attempt of introducing the goddess of liberty in the place of christianity; we cannot feel any strong inducement to give up a church establishment, for by this alone can we hope, after what has happened in France, that any religion can be preserved in the country. So far from thinking the decline of the pope's

pope's authority, and the dissolution of all attachment to the Roman Catholic persuasion, a reason for taking away any of those props, which have supported our own establishment, it becomes doubly necessary to fortify and protect it, in order to secure the existence of some religion in the land. It is owing to the looseness of morals and religious opinions, that we see men of such different tenets and adverse persuasions join upon this question, they feel no difficulty to support the catholic in making an inroad upon the constitution in church and state; because, if they can employ them successfully in making the first breach, they know they can then commit catholic and protestant, and rise upon the ruins of both.

The right hon. Baronet will consider that this alarm arises from prejudice; but, Sir, I think I might venture to ask him, though I could not presume to caution a man of his experience and age, as I ventured to do an hon. member in the beginning of the Debate, whether he would recommend to the house to take any step, or form a decision upon any assurance he could give, that the catholics would never attempt, when they had it in their power, in consequence of their being admitted to a share of the legislature, to demolish the protestant church, and substitute the Romish in its stead, or that those who support their claims do not look to a change in the constitution.

I have endeavoured to argue this question as abstractedly as the subject of it would admit; and I am confident, that if I have been successful in proving that this bill is inconsistent with the existing constitution, I shall not be considered as any enemy to the catholic more than to the protestant. I maintain, that by supporting the constitution, I am a friend to both. I will say more: This bill, if carried, must necessarily weaken the connection between Great Britain and this country, and if it should have that tendency, I am not only speaking for both protestant and catholic, but for mankind; for whom is Europe to look to for its liberty at the present crisis, but to the protection and power of Great Britain?

An hon. gentleman whispers—a poor dependance!—Sir, I will venture to say, that it is a remarkable feature in the history of these times, that even in the convention where there is no respect of persons, where kings, princes and ministers are freely spoken of, and their intrigues developed without reserve, there has never been the slightest infinuation of corruption in the court of Great Britain; however great their animosity may be, they look to Great Britain with awe, as every other country courts her for protection.

It has been urged by some gentlemen both in and out of the house, that the concession of the right of voting necessarily induced the claim that is now made: If I had been in Ireland at the time, I confess that I might have paused upon that question; but it by no means follows, that a right of sitting in parliament, and holding great offices, arises out of the other. A right of voting might give

an influence in this house, (and perhaps its existence may be proved this night) which would tend to give a security to the catholics for the enjoyment and continuance of those advantages they had lately acquired; that sort of influence is felt in England, and reconciles the notion of not being represented.

Sir, it is no longer a question of indulgence and expediency, we must now decide whether the principles of the constitution as established at the revolution are to be supported or not. I rejoice as much as any man, at all the relaxations that have taken place in favour of the Roman Catholics; and I will prove to them the sincerity of my professions by supporting the constitution under which they derive so many advantages in common with the protestants, and I will endeavour to give stability to the whole, by shewing a firm and temperate determination to resist all inroads upon it.

I will give security to the catholic as well as protestant property, by a cool and deliberate decision upon this point; and I will endeavour to rescue the innocent and well intentioned from the artifices of those secret enemies, who wish to engage them in undermining the constitution under a false pretence of acquiring personal emancipation, by an open, firm, and manly declaration, That even for them I will not sacrifice the principles of the constitution.

Sir L. PARSONS said, it was evident that the Catholic bill was in itself a measure of no concern to the English cabinet: for no one had contradicted the statement, that had been made on the subject by Lord Fitzwilliam and his ministers.—Besides, though every one here understood immediately after his arrival that it was to have been the principal feature in his administration; yet upwards of two months elapsed, ministers in England knowing this, before they notified a dissent from it: and then too it appeared by the Duke of Portland's letter, that the measure was only to be deferred, not the principle condemned. This proved that English ministers only wished to make this measure subservient to their own machinations, and that they thought a majority in that house would be so base and corrupt as to join them in doing so.—In 1792 a majority decided against giving any further privileges to the Catholics.—In 1793 the same majority passed the Catholic bill.—At the beginning of this session every one believed, that a majority would have voted for this bill: every one believed that a majority will vote against it now; and should the English ministers in the next session wish it should pass, who does not believe, that a majority will vote for it then? besides if the English ministry should be changed, an event perhaps not very remote, this bill would be immediately adopted. Is it then worth while in order to stave off this measure at the utmost for a year or two, to keep the people, at such a critical time as this, in a state of irritation and discontent? I say, there is no law expressly against Catholics fitting in parliament: nor were they excluded by any act but one which passed in 1782, commonly called

ed Yelverton's act. That required that Members should take the oath of supremacy and subscribe the declaration; and in these there were three things contrary to the tenets of the Catholics, viz. an abjuration of the spiritual supremacy of the Pope; of the invocation of the Virgin Mary, and of the doctrine of transubstantiation.—As to the two last they were matters purely of religious concern, and to exclude a man from Parliament because he chose to pray to the Virgin Mary, or believed in transubstantiation, was too absurd to dwell on: but as to the papal supremacy, that was a matter of state, and deserved consideration. Mr. Locke on Toleration maintains, that the only principle upon which any government can refuse to tolerate any religion, is if any of the tenets of the religion be dangerous or injurious to the government. Now those tenets of the Catholic church which were so esteemed, the Catholics of Ireland have abjured. By the oath in the Catholic bill of 1793 they abjure the infallibility of the Pope; they abjure his absolving power; and they abjure his temporal supremacy.—His spiritual supremacy only remains, and who is so silly as to have any apprehension from this now?—Formerly the power of the Popes was very formidable: they were the principal instigators here of the Catholics against the Protestants. Pope Urban the 8th applauded the zeal of the Irish Catholics in propagating their faith by warring against heretics in the horrid rebellion of 1641, and immediately after granted them a full and plenary indulgence and remission of their sins. He supplied the Catholics here with money: he sent Renunciti as his nuncio here to encourage them to fight for the Catholic faith. But who fears the Pope now? or who thinks he would now instigate the Catholics to rebel? But the other day, so little is he now feared by our government, and so sunk is he in his own country, a regiment was sent from this kingdom to protect him. It is childish therefore to have any apprehension from his spiritual supremacy now, when his temporal supremacy, his infallibility, his absolving power, in short every thing that made him formidable is abjured, and his authority so withered and decayed here and every where. How absurd then is it to compare the present time with the past, and say that the laws which were necessary formerly are necessary now? But even formerly, when Popes were in all their plenitude of power, Catholics were not excluded from parliament. The first time any oath of supremacy was enacted in this country was at the reformation in the reign of Henry the VIIIth, but members of parliament were not required to take it, and Catholics continued to sit in parliament. It was repealed in the succeeding reign;—and it was afterwards re-enacted in the reign of Elizabeth.—Still however it was not required, that members of parliament should take it, and Catholics still sat in parliament: and so they continued to do till 1641, when in consequence of the rebellion, a resolution passed, but not a law, requiring the oath of supremacy to be taken by the members; and this in consequence of the interference of the Pope and the Jesuits in that rebellion.

But

But Catholics were soon again admitted into parliament, by our ancestors, and so they continued to be, until the revolution, that is for 150 years did Catholics sit in parliament; and this too at a time when they believed in all the most dangerous tenets of their church —when the Popes in every respect were most formidable, and when the Catholics possessed a very considerable part of the landed property of the kingdom;—and when therefore there were ten times as many of them in parliament as there could possibly be now, if this bill were to pass;—and yet during all that time there was no act of theirs in parliament from which any inconvenience to the state was suffered. And though they were excluded from the house of commons for a short time in 1641, yet it was for nothing they did in parliament, but for what they did out of it; and so little were our ancestors apprehensive of any danger from re-admitting them, that they re-admitted them soon after; and in the reign of Charles II. when they were excluded from the English parliament, they were not from the Irish. Those therefore who assert that these kingdoms would be separated, and the established religion subverted if Catholics were admitted into parliament, have in the teeth of their assertion this positive fact, that *for a century and a half preceding* the revolution, Catholics did sit in every parliament here, and yet during that time these kingdoms did continue united, and the established religion unsubverted; nor was any act passed in all that time to the prejudice of either.—At the revolution Catholics were excluded; but how? Not by an Irish, but by an English act. An act which no one will presume to say, has any authority in this kingdom. On this principle Chief Baron Yelverton's act was passed in 1782: his enjoins members to take the oath and make the declaration which preclude Catholics from parliament: the repeal of this act would admit them: and this shews the ignorance of those who say, that the king would by assenting to the admission of Catholics here, violate his coronation oath: for to repeal an act which he passed in 1782, that is in 22 years after he took his coronation oath, could not be a violation of that oath. He concluded by saying, that from his own knowledge, and from the information he received from numbers who knew the Catholics well, he was persuaded, that their priests had almost totally lost their influence over them: that they would not therefore be influenced by them, but by their landlords in the disposal of their votes; that almost all the landlords of the kingdom were Protestant; and therefore that no apprehension ought to be entertained from admitting Catholics into parliament, as the number would be very small that would be admitted did this bill pass: that it would certainly pass very soon, and that it was better it should do so now, and so put an end at once to all dissention and disunion in the country. If the people were united, they might set their external foes at nought; and be henceforth a nation, which none without would dare to assail, and none within to trample upon.

Right Hon. Mr. CUFFE said, he could only judge of Lord Fitzwilliam's intentions on this subject from general report; for though in very early life he had had the happiness of being intimately known to that nobleman, whom he much respected and admired, yet he had never spoken to him upon that subject. The bill before the house was matter of the highest importance, and every man should form his determination by the conviction of his own mind, regardless of any party motive; for himself, having no object in view but the good of his country, he would consider only how that might be affected by the bill; and in considering this, two questions naturally presented:—First, what benefit had resulted to the country from the indulgences already extended to the Roman Catholics; whether they had contributed to the peace and prosperity of the country, or had only been an incitement to new claims and turbulent importunity? And secondly, how far the house, by entering on a measure so very desperate as the present bill, would injure the protestant establishment? As to the first question: the benefit that immediately succeeded the indulgences granted in Lord Westmorland's administration, was a close confederacy formed between the heads of the Roman Catholic convention, and the disaffected of Belfast, for the purpose of forcing a parliamentary reform; seditious publications, by which the country has been kept in a state of partial insurrection: And now those people, who formerly came as humble supplicants to entreat for favour and indulgence, come like swaggering bullies to demand a restoration of rights! Sir, this conduct never can succeed; the house of commons never will submit to be swaggered into compliance; and those who attempt to impress you with fear, let their numbers be ever so great, will only excite your indignation. In what he said, Mr. Cuffe did not mean to include all the Roman Catholics; many of the noblemen and gentlemen of that religion were persons of great worth and honour; but it was of the seditious papists of the metropolis he spoke—men who had nothing less in view than the destruction of the constitution, and establishing in its stead the tyranny and anarchy of France, and to separate this kingdom from England. If this was true, and it was manifestly so, the second was answered. With a constitution different from England we could not long remain connected—the protestant church must instantly perish: To preserve the connection of England, we must have the same constitution, the same king, the same religion. He did therefore adjure the honourable persons that composed that assembly to respect the oaths that the wisdom of their predecessors had placed as guards to the constitution;—the oaths taken by the king at his coronation—the oaths taken by every member on obtaining a seat in that house, and not rashly break the bands which connect Ireland with the British Empire.

Colonel BLAQUIERE said, that the bill produced was dangerous to the constitution. He stated, that it went in a direct line to overturn the realm both in church and state. He expressed his

his surprise to find the Right Hon. mover persisted; that however, he owned he was present some time ago, when the Right Hon. member prefaced this bill, and at the same time he thought he sounded the knell of the constitution of England in the house of commons of Ireland: he said, that he was the more surprised, as he had often heard him speak of the British constitution with the greatest reverence, and, as he thought, with a degree of love:—He stated, that in his doing it, he must have been sensible of the danger there must be in giving cause at this time for jealousies in the kingdom, and that it surely was a very dangerous measure.—He stated that the sceptre being swayed by a catholic, was a measure to be guarded against by all protestants. He then entered into an historical detail to prove his assertions; he stated first, that in the reign of Charles II. the act of settlement passed; that the commons fearing the sovereignty might devolve to the next in succession, that a bill of exclusion was brought forward to prevent the succession, and that it was carried by a majority of 79.—The king was incensed at this proceeding, and used his utmost to prevent its passing in the upper house, it was notwithstanding brought forward, and the bill was rejected by only two. He continued his historical argument, to shew his reasons for opposing the bill. He then staled king James's accession, and that almost immediately upon it, he summoned a catholic parliament, and repealed at once the act of settlement; and soon after, by his own authority, repealed all the penal statutes; he said it was unnecessary to say more on that reign. He then dwelt strongly on the reign of queen Anne; he said she was educated a protestant, and she had taken the coronation oath; but that she had not ascended the throne two years, when she violated that oath. He stated different occurrences in that reign, and, in particular, that the queen, during her whole reign, endeavoured to place the Pretender on the throne; and had it not been for that determined parliament, doubts might arise whether or no we should have now our most gracious sovereign on the throne.—He stated, that the smallest tincture of the catholic communion remaining could never be eradicated. He called upon the house to say, in case they passed the bill, what security could they have for their lives and properties?—He begged leave to say, that with regard to their lives, they were trifling in comparison to the constitution; and with regard to their properties, that he was not averse to declare, that he stood there as a person of none.—He said that his children were his property; that he had educated them in the protestant religion, and that he could not help but to lament, that in a few years they would be obliged to seek for an asylum in a foreign country.—He would not decide on the question too precipitantly; that they were now in an awful state: that the commons he hoped would imitate the parliament of queen Anne; that they at this moment had an opportunity of shewing themselves bold and steady. He added, let the ministers have reason to declare to his majesty, that the commons of Ireland have placed the British constitution in the centre of their house; and the basis of it is

now fixed in that dreadful chasm which was made in it in the year 1793, there to remain rivetted and immovable until time and place shall be no more!—He added, let the ministers also declare, that they would not allow such a bill to be presented, so as to lay his majesty under that disagreeable situation, to refuse a request which his coronation oath would call upon him and oblige him to do:—and further, he begged the attention of the house to hear one word more, and then he would end. He stated that to be with regard to the tender sex: he said, that in case the bill should pass, there could not be the least doubt but that great calamity would ensue, and could not be far off, of meeting the widows in the streets of this metropolis covered with weeds, and lamenting the loss of their dearest friend, and holding in their arms infants insensible of their danger. He then added, that if after all that has been said, and will be said, the bill should pass, he knew then that the protestants had no shield or refuge left but the union of both kingdoms, and added, that he himself would be the person, at the opening of the next session, that would bring forward that motion.

Mr. TIGHE, jun. in a speech of much argument and eloquence, supported the bill.

At about one o'clock Mr. CURRAN moved to adjourn the debate, upon the grounds of the exhausted state of the House, and the practice of the English parliament; in which he was supported by Counsellor Egan.

Sir J. BLAQUIERE resisted it—that the House was in full possession of the merits of the question, and would be better able to decide at this time when their minds were fully impressed with the magnitude and importance of this tremendous measure, than at any future day:—It was true, he admitted there was one instance on the English journals of such a proceeding, when the House overwhelmed by the eloquence of a gentleman in opposition (Mr. Sheridan) adjourned the debate;—but no such circumstance has appeared in this debate—and as that proceeding in the English House has been productive of much inconvenience, he hoped the House would avail themselves of this example, and avoid falling into the same error.

Sir EDWARD NEWENHAM said, that some gentlemen who had spoke in this debate, insinuated that Roman Catholics composed the glorious volunteer army which on a former occasion saved this country, whereas it is a well known fact that there were few, very few Roman Catholics in that body of men. I allow, said he, that latterly there were a body of men who styled themselves the *national volunteers*, or guards, composed almost entirely of Roman Catholics; these men wore green jackets, green helmets and green cockades; they had the Irish harp as their arms; but not the crown.—Two learned gentlemen have ransacked the page of history

history to prove when and how the Roman Catholics were deprived of seats in Parliament; for his part he was free to own, that it was a matter of indifference to him, for he would not now give them seats. Look at the petitions on your table; they, without any variation, demand a repeal of ALL the restrictive laws under which, they say, they labour. This bill fully complies with the prayer of those petitions, except that it does not admit a *Papist* to inherit the throne of this kingdom. Their committees, their priests, their Francis-street orators, all join in the most unqualified abuse of every Protestant that presumes to differ from them. This is a just specimen of Popish toleration.

Are Protestants to be debarred the freedom of debate? Are their words to undergo the scrutiny of Popish inquisition? They have now shewn us what we are to expect if they obtain more power. In order to *satisfy* this abuse, a priest was chosen president at one of their late meetings, where the most violent resolutions, ill-becoming the supposed ministers of peace, were adopted. The holy president, and the rest of the holy associated priests, were particularly thanked for their *cordial co-operation* in the business of that day. Now, Sir, let us see what the business of that day was; it was a string of resolutions abusing such Protestants as differed from them, particularly the majority of the corporation of the metropolis; they call the Protestant cause a *prostrate cause*; they say, that they view with scorn and indignation those 41 members of that corporation who supported that cause; they call them the shameless advocates of unqualified oppression and avowed monopoly. If, Sir, this bill should pass, then indeed the Protestant cause would be prostrate; then, indeed, we should feel their indignation by the loss of property, and our civil and religious liberties. They speak truth in that resolution, when they say they view those 41 men with scorn, for there never was a popish writer or a popish orator that did not treat all Protestants with scorn; their publications talk of uniting all religions, but every man of common sense knows that it is the leading principle of the power and religion of Rome, which says, with all the thunders of the *Vatican*, that no faith is to be kept with heretics. By a paltry and daring attempt to ridicule, they stile the majority of the city corporation *Protestant ascendancy* men. Committing ourselves is become the fashionable order of the day, therefore I commit myself to the *Protestant* principles of the *Protestant ascendancy* men of the *Protestant* corporation of the city of Dublin. So cordially do I coincide with them in opinion that I should thank any friend for promising me to have engraved on my tomb, "Here resteth the body of a friend to the *Protestant ascendancy*." If we pass this bill, there remains but one disability, which is that no papist can wield the sceptre of the crown of Ireland; but that remaining *trifle* would be repealed as a matter of course.

In my mind there is not a clause in the whole bill that does not militate against the Protestant interest and our connection with Great Britain. Can it be imagined, that if they had seats in this

house, they would not endeavour to repeal ALL acts of attainders and forfeitures. If a time of general trouble should occur in this kingdom, they would tack those bills of repeal to the money bills; and thereby unhinge government or gain the point. I am against the bill *in toto*—I am adverse to its principles, for I am a friend to our present establishment in church and state. Some of these petitioners, in their late meetings, say that the awful moment is come, *nunc aut nunquam*. In that point I readily join issue with them, for that point is, whether we shall have a popish or a protestant parliament; there is no alternative—there must be either a popish or a protestant *ascendancy*, for you might as soon expect to wash the *Aethiopian white*, or make the leopard change his spots, as that the church of Rome would bear an equal power.

I most ardently hope that the memory of this day (the 5th of May, 1795) may be celebrated in the Protestant calendar, as we now celebrate the 12th of July, 1691—we have George the Third to support the constitution of William the Third. To the principles of the immortal William the house of Hanover owes its diadem—to the principles of this bill the house of Hanover can never accede, without shaking the empire to its foundation. The English would never accede to a breach of the compact and act of settlement; I am therefore for the rejection of the bill.

Mr. W. SMITH. Sir, it has not been without considerable surprise, that I have this night heard the Bill of Rights made use of (if I may express it) as a bill of proscription: That I have heard a bill, whose avowed purpose was to assert the rights and liberties of the great body of the people, made use of as an authority to warrant us in excluding from all share of political power three millions of men, three-fourths of our people. Sir, I support the Catholic claims, on the ground of general justice, and temporary expedience. In fact, he who demonstrates the justice of a measure, goes far towards proving the policy of that measure. The abstract justice of satisfying the Catholic demand is deducible from the nature of political power in this country. I cannot hesitate to pronounce that in our revered constitution, its origin and end is the security of civil right. Ask a theorist, who, having scrutinized the British scheme of government, finds the peerage endowed with most important powers to explain to you the justice of investing them with those powers, he will reply, that the justness of their authority consists in this, that it is necessary towards protecting the rights of the aristocracy. Turn this answer to a test of the propriety of Catholic claims. Do they act unreasonably in requiring a security for those civil rights, whose safe enjoyment is what, speaking in the abstract, and throwing out of our consideration the provisions of municipal law, makes treason an offence, and loyalty a duty?—There are countries, Sir, where if I should pronounce that its tendency to secure mens civil rights from violation is the only justifiable source of power, my assertion might be refuted by the logic of a dungeon; but this position cannot offend the powers subsisting

subsisting here, since it but repeats a principle of that constitution from whence they flow. Are not Catholics possessed of rights? Doubtless: and of rights which our late liberality has much enlarged; but shall we not accompany the rights conceded with the means for their protection? Our recent gifts were of no value, if not intended to be permanent: of little, if exposed to the constant peril of invasion. The language of our constitution to its worshippers is this; "as *rights*, I give you all that is truly valuable in social life:—take *privilege* as a pledge for their perpetual enjoyment."—The man who holds his civil rights, unattended by protecting powers, holds the former insecurely, and at the will of others. Our rights are our constitutional possessions; our privilege, the entrenchment with which we fence them in. Why should this latter be denied to the Catholic subject?—On what principle?—On none of those, assuredly, which support the constitution. Abstractedly speaking, in the spirit of British freedom, political power is either no where just, or it is but justice to extend it to the Catholics; but the Catholics are a distinct sect—a separate branch of the community from us!—By so much the more entitled to claim a share of power; for by so much the less likely are we to guard their rights; in whose security we take no immediate interest ourselves. Recur again to the privileges which our nobility possess: it is, amongst other reasons, because the body of our aristocracy is distinct, that its members are properly invested with peculiar powers. But enough of general topics; I come now to the temporary expedience of the measure.

I scorn an arbitrary populace, as much as any of my hearers; and, were I certain of the utility of any measure, should support that measure, at the risk of insurrection; when the intrinsic quality of a measure was but doubtful, I would suffer its unpalatableness to weigh against its adoption. It seems a becoming principle in every free government, that popular inclination should turn a wavering balance. The will of the multitude is not law, but it may be evidence; it may not bind, but it should influence. In rejecting the Catholic claims, shall we comply with the public wish? Undoubtedly not: for the Catholics are the public;—consider this maturely; they are the great body of your people; it is no very extravagant hyperbole to call them *Ireland*. Consider next, the present mighty crisis: the awful and unparalleled situation of the world. Is not the human character tremendously fermenting? and shall we not guard our country from the effects of its explosion? Shall we rather throw in a further leaven of discontent, and by souring the Catholic mind, encrease the effervescence? Is this a time which calls for mere negative allegiance? an indolent acquiescence in the present scheme of things, which refrains alike from loyalty and treason? Or does not the period demand rather a zeal for the constitution, which none, who are aliens to its benefits, can feel?—It is at all times the bold spirit of our manly constitution that the subject's person shall be respectable, as well as free. Hence the energy of Britons. No man can be zealous for a cause which flights

flights and puts him down; and if government would enrol Catholic enthusiasm on their side, it is not by Catholic degradation they will excite it; but government *have* need of the enthusiasm of their people; for the licentious hand of anarchy is raised against all government. Jacobinism is abroad: the lower classes of society form his prey: in Ireland these are Catholics. Shall we shut the gates of our Constitution, and expose them to this monster? Shall we estrange them by that contumely which a Roman Satirist describes as the most intolerable evil attendant on low estate? Let us not be too penurious in concession. *Half Citizen*, and *whole* Jacobin might become synonymous in these days. The policy of France is to estrange the nation from its rulers: Shall not the counter policy of Ireland be to unite them? To little purpose is ministerial coalition; unless you make the parties of your people coalesce. Events now pass upon a greater scale. The days of puny and minute cabal are at an end.

Protestantism is the established religion of the state; but I will go a step higher, and say, that Christianity is (more remotely) our establishment. In the paramount bonds of this sublime religion, whose very name suggests good will to all men, we are at once connected with our Catholic fellow-subjects. Let us remember this grand union, and forget subordinate distinctions. As statesmen, as well as believers, we should be Christians;—for infidelity and Jacobinism march hand in hand. The same man who wrote the “*Age of Reason*,” was also the author of the “*Rights of Man*.”—Christianity is attacked in Europe. Should not all its descriptions be embodied for its support? and the worship, throughout all its branches, be made respectable? The breast, from which this orderly religion is once banished, has lost the firmest stay, which supported its allegiance. Remembering this, we must, assuredly, be cautious how we impose disabilities on the Catholic. Disgusted with the incapacities which cling around their tenets, the unenlightened might rashly wreak their vengeance on religion, and seek refuge in infidelity, and its Jacobin train of notions. Such is the usual progress of popular dereliction.—They rush, inconsiderately, from one extremity to another; from superstition to infidelity; from servility to licence. The history of French confusion attests the truth of what I say. Nor would the Catholic apostate reason wildly, though profanely: for, when once he had become an infidel, he might seem to be a Protestant; and could thus get over all his incapacities at once. Consider this; his disabilities arise, I admit, from his being Catholic: but do they not spring, more remotely, from his being Christian?—It is not Popery, but Christianity, that stands between him and false swearing. We should be cautious how we even *seem* to impose penalties on religion—a tax upon the Christian is a bounty to the Infidel.

But the Catholics are so numerous—their religion may predominate, and our establishment be overturned. Perhaps here does exist some risk; and having preferred it to a greater, we ought to guard against it. I shall always concur in defence of the church of Ireland;

land; I shall always concur in defence of *Protestant Ascendancy*:—an expression which, I know not why, has been latterly laid aside, but which conveys what, I think, *our religion* should enjoy. I would give ascendancy to the church, but not to the individual; except so far as the latter be necessary to secure the former; and in measuring the degree, I feel there is some nicety. But the number of the Catholics seems an ill reason for their subjection, in a country whose constitution says the many shall be free! It is an unlucky circumstance that our establishment lying one way, our population lies another; but we must take things as they are; and I hold that an establishment unusually contracted, demands a toleration uncommonly extensive; one which will not stop at the removal of penalties, but will also venture on conferring powers.

Persuaded, as I am, of the superior excellence of our religion, I must believe that its extent will be proportioned to our civilization; that Protestantism will find converts, and flourish amongst our commonalty, in proportion as that commonalty shall become enlightened: I therefore hold an attempt to keep our populace in a state of barbarism and degradation, as calculated to impede the progress of the Protestant religion.

But, if there be danger of Catholic pre-eminence on the one hand, is there no fear of Jacobin principles on the other? And if their poison had already tainted the Catholic body, should we best prevent its farther progres by proscription?—But why turn all our caution to the quarter which least wants it? Let us chuse our alternative. If *Pius* be the conqueror, who is to overset our Constitution—(the mighty *Pius*! the late protégée of a regiment of dragoons!)—we should hasten to negotiate with the Jacobins of France;—but, if this latter be the quarter from whence danger is apprehended, we should embrace our Catholic fellow-subjects without delay. Shall we render penalties eternal, which even as temporary were oppressive, and continue fetters on religion which were originally meant for politics? for certain state opinions of which Popery was made the test?—Opinions, let me add, whose mischief was but fugitive, and has long since passed away. Would you know what are Catholic principles at this day?—Examine the brigade, you will there behold our countrymen in the character of staunch Royalists, steadily resisting all Republican seduction, and loyal to the Bourbons as they had been to the Stuarts;—loyal as they had been to that infatuated James, who vainly espoused the cause of a small minority of his subjects against the rights and wishes of the great body of his people.—Let us not pursue an example which we abhor: it is as wrong to be a bigot for the Protestant as for the Papist.

What pledge have we for the loyalty of the Catholic ecclesiastic? for his steady aversion to the Jacobin chaos of principles?—We have the cruelties exercised on his order by the French; we have his consciousness that Jacobinism must be the ruin of the Priesthood. What security have we for the loyalty of the Catholic gentlemen?—We have his stake of property in the country; we have his stake of rank in society—that rank which makes him the natural champion

of subordination. We have, assuredly, as good security in the case of the gentleman as of the peasant ; and should be cautious how, transferring degradation from the latter, we impose it, as a less tolerable stigma, upon rank. This, if there were disaffection, would be to give it leaders. I, for my part, should rather see the ancient gentleman, the heir of catholic wealth, and perhaps of catholic dignity, seated as a popular representative amongst us ; one whose rank and property stood as pledges for his conduct, than behold some protestant tool of catholic electors :—the ready instrument of their worst party-views : the needy representative of indigent constituents.

Suppose danger from the Catholics ;—yet, where some risk must be run, we ought to chuse the least.—I would fain preserve our Church establishment unimpaired, superstitiously inviolate in its most remote *pomaria* ; but should rather abate somewhat of Protestant pre-eminence, than not ensure the fabrick of both Church and Constitution. Superficial yielding may be fundamental con-
versation :

*“ imaque tellus
Stet, quia summa fugit.”*

But, from all I can collect, the dangers are imaginary ; and such the state of interests and property in this country, that the Catholics will not enter at once on the practical enjoyment of that privilege, which they call on us in theory to bestow. They will creep gradually and safely into consequence amongst us, acquiring at every step an habitual love for the Constitution, and even at last, not transgressing the bounds of Protestant security.

In the pursuit of my profession, I lately saw a Grand Jury, consisting entirely of Protestants. This fact either goes to demonstrate the truth of my last assertion, by shewing that there could not be found a single Catholic in the whole county, of property entitling him to be called preferably to Protestants on the Grand Jury ; or it proves that the incapacities under which Catholics still labour, may be made a handle for withholding the favours already granted, and on this ground I might argue strongly for their further emancipation.

But this subject will be so much better treated by others than by me, that I shall not engross longer the attention due to them. I shall not dwell upon the topic of so much having been granted, that it is become impolitic on this ground, to refuse extending our concessions ; a topic urged with sufficient strength, Mr. Speaker, by the ablest of Catholic opponents in 1793. I shall not dwell on the many friends which the Catholic claims have latterly obtained amongst the Protestants. I shall conclude when I have noticed a hint which caught my ear, that attachment to the Catholics means estrangement from Great Britain. I disclaim harbouring any such sentiment as the latter. I wish the two countries to continue ever one cordial intimately well connected Empire. I wish their harmony from prejudice, as well as principle. From prejudice the growth of my partialities towards England—a considerable portion of

of my life was spent there, and the thought of England connects itself with all that is pleasing to my mind. It was the place of my education—the scene of these early years, and of those early habits, which the memory recalls and cherishes with most delight. I am proud to think it contains many friends, who much regard me; and persons whose esteem affords a reasonable ground for pride. I am, besides, persuaded, that in their harmony consists the welfare of both islands.—If any man wished a breach and endeavoured to foment it, he should find in me, if not a formidable, at least a strenuous opponent. Did the Catholics desire a rupture, I should vote against their emancipation.

Mr. OGLE said his sentiments on the subject of this bill were already well known—he had opposed it in the first instance, and would oppose it in every stage where he should meet it. He would not have so often troubled the House, but that he had a solemn duty to discharge—to rally round the Constitution, and to restore to his constituents their dearest rights, which they had committed into his hand;—as yet he had never deserted the Protestant body, nor, however gloomy the prospect, had he ever lost his road.—To the bill he would oppose the Revolution—the Coronation oath—the oath of Abjuration—the establishment of Church and State—the act of Union and of Settlement—the right of the House of Hanover—the acts of this session—and the forfeited lands;—he therefore hoped the bill would never go into a committee.

Rt. Hon. D. LATOUCHE was against the bill, because it prostrated at the feet of the catholics all the great offices of state; it releases them from obligations which the protestants are bound by, and therefore it was partial. In his opinion it endangered the Hanoverian succession, because for any thing that appeared in the bill it did not prevent the crown from gracing the brow of a Roman Catholic king, which he prayed heaven to avert. He would on these grounds oppose every clause of it.

Honourable GEORGE KNOX. Sir, It is apparent to every man, that at no period, since the settlement of this country, has there existed a necessity so prompt and absolute to secure the affections and unite the exertions of the whole people, as the present. We are engaged in a war, not of sieges and of battles merely, not a contest of revenue and resources; if it were, the grants of our Parliaments, and the gallantry of our armies, would remove from us all apprehensions; but we are engaged in a conflict with an enemy whose weapon is seduction, whose successes are sedition, and whose victories are insurrection; we are contending with principles the most fascinating, and the most pernicious—the most exalted in appearance, the most selfish in reality; principles which affect to restore us to our best rights, by subjecting us to our worst passions—to purify our morals, by banishing our religion—and to support the constitution, by violating every maxim on which it is founded, and subverting every establishment by which it is upheld.

Such,

Such, Sir, is our warfare ; and I will not scruple to assert, that on our vote this night depends whether we shall establish in this country those principles which must be our destruction, or whether we rescue our fellow subjects from that gulph into which they are fast sinking, and into which, if they do fall, we must inevitably be dragged.—I say, Sir, that if we refuse this bill, we shall do, unintentionally indeed, but really and effectually, the most signal service to our enemies. For observe how exactly our conduct will correspond with their views : they aim at the extinction of all *constitutional* principles and privileges, and laugh at all rights which time and precedent have authorized and established.—we violate them : what follows ? the people will forget or neglect them ; and if they do, if they once cease to struggle for known, determined, existing constitutional principles, depend upon it they will soon speculate on the establishment of new ones ; depend upon it they will not be long before they resort to what is called FIRST principles ; they will not be long before they throw off the painful, though salutary, restraint of laws ; they will not long covet those British privileges which we shall have taught them to despair of and despise.—No : they will soon adopt, with the zeal of novices, but with the skill of the experienced, the whole system of organized anarchy, philosophic barbarity, and patriotic rapine, of which an example is before them, and for the accomplishment of which, no doubt, a fraternal assistance could speedily be solicited and obtained.—And to this point they are not led by slow degrees : Such has been the unfortunate fluctuation of our councils, that they will now be driven to it by what they deem, however it may be meant, an insulting attack upon the most energetic, implacable, and glowing passion of the human breast—their pride.

On the ground of present expediency, therefore, it is evident that this bill cannot be resisted.—It is happy for the country that it is equally irresistible on the ground of right and permanent advantage.

This truth cannot be disputed :—that no government, except a military and despotic one, can long exist unless it is supported by the opinion of the governed ; it may endure for a season of tranquillity, but must perish in the first storm. In barbarous times, that opinion, and the strength it gives, has generally been found, either in the superstition of the people, which places their understandings under the controul of their spiritual teachers—or in their attachment to certain chiefs who have been used to lead them into the field, and from whose skill and prowess they derive honour and security ; but when an opener intercourse has enlarged the understandings of men, and when commerce has diffused her treasures and her knowledge, where is that government to look for permanence and protection which does not depend upon its military strength ? Not, as formerly, to the clergy—their influence has followed the ignorance which nourished and maintained it ; not to the barons—their damp and cobwebbed halls are no longer crowded with vassals at once valiant and submissive ; you must search for them

them in the capital—there they are to be found, impoverished by the luxuries, and enervated by the vices of commerce, whilst their late followers are earning and enjoying her gains and her independence.—Where, then, must the Throne take refuge, since ignorance and superstition, barbarism and chivalry, present it no asylum? *In the arms of reason, and under the mantle of wealth.* Wealth is, then, the aristocracy which upholds the monarch, and reason is the religion which sanctifies his authority. These, sir, are the general principles and history of all free governments; they are more peculiarly the principles and ancient practice of the British constitution.—That wise constitution has always rested on the maxim (which is, in truth, its main pillar) of admitting into legal powers and privileges whoever had strength to injure or support it; The clergy and the barons were courted by the crown as long as they swayed the public opinion; when property and knowledge, and consequently independence of sentiment, became more diffused, the commons were resorted to, and admitted into the state; and when, at length, commerce had so spread out the wealth of the nation that the feudal aristocracy was completely annihilated, a principle, the broadest illustration of the doctrine was broached and acknowledged, that taxation and representation could not be separated, that is, that in the British constitution power could never be disunited from wealth. Now, sir, I do not mean here to say that taxation and representation are separated, though the representative part of the community is so much abridged, but that the principle which gave that maxim birth begins again to be forgot. In the case of America, it is true, that principle was resisted, and what was the issue? At the Reformation, and not before, that general principle was departed from; and in the instance of the Catholics of England, it continues to be violated; but the cause of that violation, and its continuance, are both obvious, and to this country they are inapplicable. The Catholics were then a strong, united, enthusiastic state party, hostile to liberty, assisted from abroad, and openly or secretly favoured by the prince.—To keep the Reformation alive, then, in the struggles of infancy, it was necessary to exclude them from power: for the king and a Catholic clergy and cabinet united, might have overthrown both church and state. What is the case now? The Catholics weak, reduced, and disunited—(I speak of England),—and the prince and chief persons of the empire adverse to their religion; why then, do the restrictions still continue upon them in that country? The truth is, they are made a sacrifice to the prejudices of the people: their numbers are so small, that the danger and the evil are of no extent; the persecution and hatred of Popery is supposed to give strength to the Protestant Church; the parliament and the minister are not urged to meddle with the subject, and are afraid to touch it, and therefore it remains an exception to that rule. But if such an exception can be tolerated in Great Britain, is that a reason why it should exist and be favoured here? Does not the state of this country, on the contrary, peculiarly reject it? Here the great body

dy of the people is Catholic; much of the real, and no small share of the personal property of the country, in Catholic hands; the lower class ignorant and turbulent, fit instruments, therefore, in the hands of irritated and unsubdued ambition; in a few years, if trade increase, the Catholics must possess almost a monopoly of the personal wealth of the kingdom,—a controul, therefore, over the numerous class of manufacturers and mechanics—a description of people the most prone to turbulence, since their income is fluctuating and precarious, and their wants and vices always craying and unsatisfied. Now if we drive the rich Catholic from the legislature, and from our own society, we force him to attach himself to the needy and disaffected; we oblige him, if pride and ambition have their usual operation, to breed and nourish discontent, and keep alive a religious quarrel in the country. But if on the contrary, we admit him at once into this and the other house, and into the offices of state, he becomes member of our parties, and the Catholic party is forgot. But, then, the Protestant interest—I know not, sir, what some Protestants may find or fancy to be their interest, but of this I am sure, that it never can be the interest of the Protestants of Ireland to have a numerous, powerful, united, and adverse party in the country, but that it must be their interest, by accepting the services of the Catholic, to annihilate his power, and to live in peace and harmony with their fellow subjects.

Are we afraid of Republicans? Now let me ask why, in so numerous an assembly as this is, composed of men with such a variety of talents, temper, and objects, in a time of such wanton speculation as the present, scarce one republican is to be found. But suppose half of those members who have been returned to this parliament, should by law be incapacitated from sitting here; or to bring it more home—suppose all the present Northern, or all the present Southern members excluded by act of parliament, how long do you think, Sir, that they or their descendants would brook the degradation? I do suspect highly as I think of those persons, that they who are now the most loyal of his majesty's subjects would soon rank among the worst affected to the constitution, the empire of the throne: for so man is made. But suppose the Catholics, already tainted with republicanism, will privileges render them more dangerous? Will privileges add an unit to their numbers, or a guinea to their wealth? Will they become more speculative, more virulent, more united by the constitutional contests in which they will be engaged? Does any man fear that the constitution of Ireland will ever be voted away by its parliament, whatever be its religion? If a French missionary were sent to Ireland to spread the French doctrines, what would be his wishes? What could be his course? Would he, bent as he must be on assailing the principles which support this house, attempt to tamper with those whose political ruin was the prime object of his mission? No, as his wish must be to kindle a war between the privileged and unprivileged orders, he would exult to find so much of the property, and so much

much of the talents of the nation forced to confederate with the mob. That to the uncultivated and indigent, his natural allies in every state, were added here, the wealthy and well informed, his natural foes. Through the extravagated ambition of the latter, he would agitate and inflame the former, and diffuse his feverish spirit through the whole political mass. Thus we are reluctant to remove what the Jacobine wishes we should continue. It is in this house, doubtless, it is in our society that France must ever be detested, and Paine despised.

But the measure which is now proposed, we have already obliged ourselves to receive, and such was the opinion and language of the ablest adversaries of Lord Hobart's bill.

The policy of our ancestors since the revolution was a wise one, if tyranny can ever be wisdom, for it was adapted to its end, and they understood and practised the true maxims of bad government. They knew the effects of wealth and knowledge. They counted the number of the Catholics, and calculated their physical force, and they reasoned justly, and acted consistently when they deprived them of property and education. They plainly saw that on the loathsome slime of ignorance and wretchedness, could the ponderous and ill-cemented bark of their supremacy only float. The conduct and principles which they pursued at that time, we have since seen followed by the late oppressor of France. Robespierre too was the enemy of learning and of wealth. So true it is, that in all ages, and in all meridians, the cause of tyranny is the same.

What our ancestors did, however, we have undone. The legislature thought, and so far it thought justly, that we could be a powerful, prosperous, and happy people, if three fourths of us were ignorant and beggars. You, therefore, opened the gates of knowledge and of opulence, but you did not observe that on their sympathetic hinges were turning the gates of power and the constitution. Those gates once opened, no common force can close—to imagine it is folly—it is wickedness to attempt it. Take then your choice, re-enact your penal laws, risque a rebellion, a separation, or a union,—or pass this bill;—for the hour is nearly arrived when we *must* decide;—the hour is already come when we *ought* to decide;—when our decision can still be free, collected and composed;—when, Sir, are false pride, false shame, and mock consistency to recede? Is it now when the danger must be so trivial, while the numbers we admit are too minute and inconsiderable even to form a party in the house, or must we wait till wealth has added to their numbers, and irritation to their union; till they shall feel their power, and exercise it in revenge. This is a serious reflection. How many, let me ask, are there who now oppose this measure, who do not lament that it was not carried when I first proposed it? Who is there when it does pass, as pass it surely must, that will not rue this day, if this day is to be darkened and disgraced by its rejection.

In every political question, I must acknowledge there are difficulties, and to most political measures there are weighty objections;

ons; in our decisions, therefore, we must fairly weigh the advantages against the disadvantages, and rest upon the preponderating scale. To the measure before us there are some objections not to be overlooked. But when I see that the dangers which follow its rejection are inevitable and tremendous, being rooted in the very nature of man and of society, and that those to which its reception exposes us, are doubtful, distant, and avertable, I cannot bring my mind to hesitate for a moment. The minor objections to this bill have already been fully answered. I shall, therefore, confine my observations to that which is most plausible, I mean the danger to the Protestant establishment. Next to Christianity itself, I revere the protestant establishment, for it preserves religion without deifying the priesthood, allows liberty of conscience without sanctioning licentiousness, retains what is modest and venerable, and rejects what is gaudy and fraudulent in the worship from which it separated, and approaches in its tenets, as near as any other religion, and nearer than most others to the real doctrines and true spirit of the Gospel. As connected with the state, it protects the crown without debasing itself; it humbles the pride of the nobility without arrogance or assumption; it shames the licentiousness of the wealthy without cant and hypocrisy; and it leads the people to their duty without exciting their passions, or imposing on their credulity. Applied to this country too it is a bond of Imperial connexion, and therefore worthy of the care and veneration of every man who values that connexion. About this establishment, therefore, I cannot be indifferent, for I understand the advantages which arise from it: A knowledge for the want of which many of the enemies of this bill must atone by the virulence of their zeal.

Now, Sir, one of those considerations by which I have been impelled to the support of this measure, has been the real peril in which our establishment stands, if we persist in rejecting it; for if we do so persevere, I clearly see that we shall be driven to this dilemma, either to give up our national independence, or our national worship; but that by passing it now we take the most efficacious means to secure both. If, I say, we continue to exclude and irritate the Catholic, we can have no real security against the subversion of property and religion, but an unconditional submission to Great Britain, and a resignation of the crown of Ireland into the hands of the British parliament. But if we adopt it now, we shall gradually liberalize the Catholic gentry; they will see how much their property, their liberty, and their lives depend upon the constitution; they will observe how much that constitution depends on our connexion with Great Britain, and how much that connexion rests on the uniformity of the state religion. He cannot fail to see, for it will be a lesson of experience, that whatever leads to forcible separation must end in *subjection*: but that if the connection between the two countries should be dissolved by mutual consent, we should incur all the expence, without acquiring any of the profits of independence; and that when our constitution should lose the check of British influence, and our parties the arbitration of the British cabinet, we should soon be consumed by the wasting disease of a jealous

lous and rapacious oligarchy, or expire in the convulsions of a democracy. Do you think, Sir, that the Catholic gentleman, educated and living amongst us, is likely to be so silly a bigot as to sacrifice the constitution of his country to the chance of aggrandizing a few ignorant priests? Is this an age in which such a whimsy is likely to prevail? Is it not much more probable, taking into view the progress of knowledge, and the independent spirit of the times, that the Catholic gentlemen, already more than half Protestants, will bring up their children to a conformity with that faith which opens to them, without a convulsion, the profits of the church? Speak to the Catholic barrister, ask the Catholic officer his opinion, you will learn what will be the sentiment of a Catholic member of parliament. No, Sir, such a project is not, cannot be within their contemplation, or their means; but then they will force a democratic change in the representation, vulgarly, and perhaps falsely called a reform; still such a violence must come from without, from those who do not possess the privilege, not from those who do. On the contrary, I ask not the experience of this night to prove with what unwillingness men who possess a privilege admit their fellow subjects to a participation of it; I confess, therefore, I feel no alarm on the subject. If the Catholics quarrel with Great Britain, it will be, not for *their* faith, but *her* constitution.—Deprive them of the latter cause and we need not fear the former. If I tremble for the establishment, it is not the Catholic and his cross, but the Deist and his blasphemy that I fear. If the Protestant temple is to fall, it is from Protestant levity, and from Protestant profligacy; it is from those who scoff at all religion, traffic with the church, and pollute the public ear with their profaneness, that I look for the overthrow of the fabric. The lofty example is observed, and is descending; when it shall become general, when the trite jest of the ostentatious blasphemy shall issue from vulgar mouths, ministers of religion you may retire, for your mission is fulfilled. If the Protestant establishment is in danger from the Catholic, it will be from the Catholic forcing into the constitution, and carrying the church along with him. Admit him, and the church remains behind. We shall admit him; I foresee, I foretel we shall; but we shall withhold that admission so long, that at length we shall give, without generosity, what will be received without gratitude; we shall yield, not to reason, but to clamour: what ought to be the result of wisdom and reflection, will be the work of panic and precipitation; and that day which shall record the last triumph of the constitution, will to us be a day of humiliation and disgrace.

I have now, Sir, laid all the strongest objections before the house, and given them, I trust, the weight they merit. Now, Sir, suppose a man to have erected a building, but not to have secured the foundation, and to have heaped pile upon pile, till the tottering edifice was ready to tumble on his head, and he and his habitation to be destroyed by the first storm, what would be his conduct? If a prudent man, he would, no doubt, be in haste to examine into and enlarge his foundation. Yet many plausible objections might be urged

urged why he should not. The scaffolding may fall; in removing one stone a whole mass may break off;—“ Better to bear the ills we have than fly to others that we know no of;” besides, who can tell but it may last your own time; and as to your posterity, let your children take care of themselves. Our posterity!—yes, dastards as we are, these are the counsels which we hear, which we admit, which we blush to own, but which we are not ashamed to follow. The building, we hope, will last the short period of our existence, and we care not if it, and our posterity, be levelled in the dust. *After us the deluge*, was the selfish proverb ever in the mouth of the French nobility; but the deluge has rushed upon them in their own time, and swept them from the face of the earth.

Confident, Sir, however, as I am of the justice and absolute necessity of this measure; I am not surprised that it should be opposed. I can easily calculate the effects of habit, pride, and shame, irresistible in weak minds, powerful in the strongest, operating against this bill;—I can conceive much irritation against the person who brings it forward, and some interest in the defeat of a few of those who support it, raising up a host of angry or rapacious enemies; I can conceive too an honourable attachment in the best minds to a declining cause; but I cannot conceive that this can last, that the eyes of every man must not at length open to the perils which surround him, and that a measure of policy and right, of national honour and national security, shall not in the end prevail.

Such, Sir, are my sentiments; such the principles which have compelled me to come forward on this great subject. Whether I have transfused my conviction into the minds of others; whether this house will sympathize with my feelings, or be governed by my reasonings, I cannot tell; but this I will say, that no honest man could think as I do without acting as I have done. If I am mistaken now I can never hope to escape error;—to the verdict of futurity, therefore, I must submit it. I submit to it, and without fear, for what can I apprehend from her sentence? Can I suppose that Christianity will relapse into intolerance,—that the human mind will become retrograde,—and that the religion of peace and sociability shall become the instrument of strife—of the pretext of monopoly? Shall it be said that political co-existence cannot obtain amongst those who acknowledge the same revelation at a time when the alarming progress of infidelity calls upon all men who believe the gospel to confederate in its defence? Shall religion be the ground of excluding the Catholic from the temple of our constitution, into which the Deist, and even the Atheist, have access, and shall we be duped by those false alarmists who never have fears for the church till there are hopes for the constitution. If I admit that the church establishment is an object of illiberal jealousy, shall I diminish the evil, shall I secure its existence by interposing it between the nation and the constitution;—by telling a people ardent in the pursuit of their object, that there is no other impediment in their way? No; they are the effectual enemies of the church who do so. But, Sir, if I had ever approved of that system by which we consented to be slaves,

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that we might be tyrants, and sunk this country below the political horizon, that we might exclusively possess its eminences; could I continue in the same mind now that we have broke in upon that system with security;—with security, did I say?—with unexampled and rapidly increasing prosperity, now that we have discovered with what usury protected and enfranchised industry repays its obligations. Let us not, therefore, vainly and foolishly hope to eternalize this incongruous mixture of privilege and exclusion; to perpetuate the separation of the constituent from the representative; to keep the Catholic in a constant agony of expectation, and the Protestant of apprehension. Let us not delay that entire political union, on which, without doors, all ranks are now agreed—rather let us seize on this auspicious moment to ratify their wishes: thus shall we confederate their zeal in the defence of our constitution: then, and then only, shall we strike terror into our enemies abroad, and silence our calumniators at home.

Mr. MASON spoke for the rejection of the bill.

Mr. JOHNSON.—Sir, it seems to have been generally acknowledged, through the course of this debate, that the situation of the kingdom required from every honest man, a sincere exertion to encourage, as far as possible, a respect for government and a zeal for religion amongst a people, who have shewn in many instances, too strong a propensity to resist the one, and to despise the other. Yet, with this impression upon the mind of every serious man, you have been condemned to listen to harangues which bear the marks of deliberate composition, and in which every branch of your government and constitution has been represented as in a state of corruption and decay—in which the hierarchy of your protestant establishment has been ridiculed for the abuse of its dignity, and the misapplication of its wealth, and the priesthood of a tolerated religion exposed to gross and vehement charges of stupid ignorance and contemptible vulgarity. After having the constitution of the country and the Ministers of religion exposed and derided by the advocates of the papists, you are desired by the bill now before you, to open the power of the state and parliament to the pretensions of those papists; and you are called upon to do so upon no other security, than some declarations of theirs, that they do not mean to alter the constitution, or to overturn the protestant religion: To trust the existence of a state to mere declarations, must at all times be a hazardous experiment; but to trust to professions of steadiness, upon the arguments of gentlemen who have shewn in themselves a versatility of conduct, bordering upon a direct contradiction of their own avowed principles and repeated declarations, would, in my mind, be a degree of credulity, utterly inconsistent with the sober discretion of parliament. If, in the year 1792, you had heard, Sir, a young man of considerable talents, born of a noble family, (Mr. G. Knox) assert, “that as long as Great Britain remains attached to a protestant establishment and a protestant crown, so

" long must we, being protestants, remain the ruling power here, " or the connexion must be dissolved ;" —if you had heard him assert, " that we could not have a catholic parliament, and remain " long without a catholic king ;" if you had heard him assert " that the legislative power could not be one faith, and the executive power of another ; that the catholics being but men, it was " not in the nature of man but that desire should grow with gratification, and ambition with power ;" if you had found him, for such reasons, the strong advocate for *protestant ascendancy*—and in the year 1795 had heard the *same* man, with all the dignity of high family and untainted character, assert against his own assertions, argue against his own arguments, defy his own principles, and insist upon the utility of destroying that protestant ascendancy which was in the year 1792 the object of his affection, the efficient cause of his family dignity, and of his individual property ; if you have seen and heard such things, Sir, surely it should be a lesson to us, to pause before we give implicit credit to the vague declarations of men who, from their inferior situation in life, cannot be supposed to have the same high incentives to a pure and consistent conduct, as men of the rank and consequence of the person to whom I have alluded ? But this is not the only instance, Sir, which might be produced to induce us to pause before we give implicit credit to the professions or arguments of any men. Did the Right Hon. Gentleman who introduced this bill, assert within these few days that a revenue officer should be deprived of every share of political power, because that revenue officer was peculiarly attached to his native sovereign, peculiarly bound to the wealth and vigour of the state ? —and if he did so, will he assert that it is no contradiction now to argue that a popish priest, more peculiarly bound to a foreign power than a revenue officer is to his native King, under deeper impressions of gratitude for his benefice, under stronger ties of obedience from the vows of his order, loaded with foreign pay and doomed to foreign obedience, is yet fitted and qualified for the highest trust and power in the state, while the revenue officer is disqualified for exercising the lowest, because he is the immediate servant of his King ? —But if the modesty of the Right Hon. Gentleman's nature should make him hesitate at submitting to the conviction of his own arguments, let him take the authority not of himself, but of his adviser and his friend (Mr. G. P.) —What did that Hon. Member permit in the year 1783 to be published under the authority of his name ? " There are (said the Hon. Member) in this country " two sets of men, who are interested in promoting a change. The " catholics of the South, the known friends of monarchy ; the " presbyterians of the North, the votaries of republicanism ; these " latter have set on the others to make it a common cause, " and between them both the *established church* is blockaded ; but if " the people who have *established* the constitution, shall be over- " powered by those who often attempted to destroy it, we shall " have them quarrelling for seats in parliament, for authority, " and for supremacy." Such Sir, is the language which, with almost

almost prophetic penetration, was uttered in the year 1733, by the person who now is the leader of that very blockade on the established church, which at that time he so ardently resisted, and so pathetically lamented ! To that he added a solemn declaration that " he " would support with his life and fortune, that constitution under " which (he truly said) he had enjoyed every blessing." But, Sir, the magnitude of this question is such as to render it necessary to try it by a more serious investigation than a comparison of the declarations, or authority of any individuals, however respectable. It is said in the preamble of this bill, that it is " right and expedient " to remove the restriction preserved by the bill of 1793," in favour of the ancient constitution : I deny it to be expedient to do so ; and if there were no temporary inexpediency, I should deny it to be right.—They are both serious points, and deserve to be examined. The expediency must be determined by the time, the manner, and the conduct of those who have urged the measure forward.—The cause of this night's debate has been laid for some years.

The right hon. gentleman who introduced this bill, has permitted the authority of his name to be used, in order to promulgate to the people that the question in every stage of the popish claim has been, " whether three millions of loyal subjects were to be kept in " a state of degrading subjection to a body of one million?"—a mode of stating the question, calculated to inflame the passions of the multitude, but not to inform the judgment of the sober part of mankind ! It is so calculated, because there is not any law of subordination in government to which it might not as well be applied, as to the excluding principle of the British constitution.—The addition of the epithet *loyal* to the three millions of papists, and declining to give the same respectable epithet when he speaks of one million of protestants, does not seem likely to add much to the moderation of the argument. But supposing such a state of the question to be fitted for argument, I reply, that the assertion is not founded in fact. I consider Great Britain and Ireland, as to all questions of constitution, invariably intermixed : there is an error in asserting the constitutions are merely the same—there is in truth but *one* constitution, and that *one* constitution adopted and preserved in both kingdoms : no part can be changed in either kingdom without instantly affecting the other. The representative in parliament therefore, whether of Great Britain or Ireland, in questions which affect the constitution, not of a particular district, but of the empire itself, should consider himself not as the representative of a local district, or in a particular kingdom : but deciding upon an imperial interest, he should consider himself as the representative of the people of the empire. Such, on this occasion, I consider the members of the house which I now address, and such I am pleased to find a right hon. baronet (Sir H. Langrishe,) who stated the constitution as the constitution not of one or three, but of twelve millions of people, must have considered himself. Such, Sir, the members of the British parliament must also consider themselves, when they regard (as they frequently do,) attentively what passes in this kingdom. To answer then

the arrogant assumption of three millions to one million, I say, the fact does not support the assertion. If the interest of parties is to be opposed, (which I deny to be necessary,) and if that interest is to be inflamed by members, I say, then, that it is the established right, the constitutional possession of nine millions of protestant inhabitants, his majesty's subjects, from Orkney to Valentia, which is sought to be shaken by the ambitious claims of a few men, who have endeavoured for the worst purposes to put themselves at the head of a nominal three millions. God forbid, however, that this question were to be decided by the shock of numbers! but if it were, upon their heads be it, who first brought their numbers in array. I state the question then, not as it has been stated, whether three millions of *loyal* subjects are to be kept in a state of degrading subjection to a body of one million, (who are not honoured by the right hon. gentleman with the epithet of *loyal*) but as a question whether *nine* men whose names I shall state presently, and who have quitted their ordinary occupations in order to trade in the passions of the peasants of the land, shall be permitted to seize a moment of public danger to break through the last barrier which guards not the Irish alone, but the British constitution and the settlement of the royal family? I state it not as a question whether three millions are to be kept in a state of degrading subjection to one, but as a question the decision of which involves the whole of the constitution and the connexion between Great Britain and Ireland; and as the strength of Great Britain depends on the stability of that connexion, and as her empire extends now from the east to the west of the globe, involving in this night's debate almost the fate of mankind—if I prove this to be the real state of the question, I prove all that is necessary.—If this be the real state of the question, it answers itself, and leaves nothing of which a wise man should enquire, or on which a brave man should hesitate; that it is the real state of the question, a short detail of the facts which accompanied its rise and progress will demonstrate.—The claims of the papists to political power, the progress of which has given rise to the bill before you, commenced in the year 1791. In January 1791, the King's speech states the utmost prosperity of the empire; it gives assurance of tranquillity, and proposes a reduction of military establishments; the funds of Great Britain and Ireland had risen to a price which marked the unrivalled credit of the time; all was wealth, tranquillity and power. Let me call the attention of the House to the tone of the popish application at that time: The popish declaration of the year 1791 states, “It is not for the Irish catholics, armed as their cause is with reason and with justice, like public foes to seek advantage from public calamity. They ought to advance their claim at a time most favourable to discussion when the condition of the empire is flourishing and tranquil. They might seem culpable to their country, if affecting to dissemble what it were unmanly not to feel, they reserved their pretensions in ambuscade to augment the perplexities of some critical emergency.” Let any man who hears me, recollect the month of February last: the empire surrounded by foreign foes, and harassed

fed by domestic traitors—Let him recollect what was then the language of a Right Honorable Member's manifesto to thirty thousand deliberators on the constitution in Francis-street ; those deliberators were *conjured* and *pressed* at that moment of distress, “ not to “ postpone the consideration of *their* fortunes ‘till after the war.” Let any man compare the tone of these addresses, and the times at which they were published, and then say, (in the language of a celebrated society) which was the “ most seasonable, the most constitutional, and the most manly.”—In the month of February, 1792, the papists published a specification of their claims, in which the utmost extent of their wishes was declared to be “ a right of “ voting in *counties only* for *protestant* members of parliament.” This claim of voting in counties only, and for protestant members, published under the authority of Mr. Edward Byrne, as the utmost boundary of the popish objects, appeared on the 4th of February 1792, when the prosperity and strength of the empire still continued with undiminished splendor. But May 1792 presented to their wishes another scene :—The King's proclamation of 21st of May 1792, states, “ that seditious writings and persons had en-“ deavoured to villify and bring into contempt, the wife and whole-“ some provisions made at the time of the glorious revolution ;” and states, “ that correspondence had been entered into with persons in “ foreign parts, to forward the above criminal purposes.” What followed this change of fortune? From the burning soil of domestic treachery, and under the impending fires of foreign war, arose the pandemonium of Irish liberty, the *catholic convention*. Hear the language adopted by that convention, published by their authority, and compare it with the temperate call upon the wisdom and purity of the government and constitution, published by the papists in October 1791! That convention was conveyed by a circular letter of a Mr. Edward Byrne, and the letter bears a date so nearly connected with the date of the King's proclamation, as to shew that the measure of an illegal convention was hazarded, from the hope that the danger of the times would screen it from punishment. The proceedings of that convention were published in October 1792, and the publication declares to the papists of Ireland, “ that the “ protestants have nothing to give but *weakness*, and they refuse to “ receive *strength*.” It declares, “ that the democratic power is not “ preserved—that the three estates are not balanced :” it declares, “ that the people are amused with the shadow of a free govern-“ ment, while the nation droops under the silent working of despoi-“ tism ;” it calls upon the papists of Ireland to “ look (for di-“ rection and support) to the declarations of the several societies of “ United Irishmen, particularly those of Dublin and Belfast ;” and it terminates with a solemn resolution of thanks to the societies of United Irishmen, The very same body of papists who in their committee on the 10th of February 1791, “ confide with all hu-“ mility in the *justice, liberality* and *wisdom* of parliament,” on the 31st of October 1792, charge that very parliament with being the *weak* and *profligate* instrument of a “ *silent despotism*.” This manifesto of the popish convention, appears under the authority of the

the names of nine or ten men, who, on the 23d of December last, openly solicited the papists to demand, *in mass*, what is called their emancipation. This solicitation of the papists to come forward in a body, was published on the 23d of December 1794, and was the consequence of a meeting held by a Right Hon. Gentleman, with the papists' committee, on the day of his landing from England, about the 15th of December, and in which meeting he made an agreement, that if they came forward they should have the support of government, although Lord Fitzwilliam had engaged to postpone the question.

I have stated, Sir, the thanks of this convention to the Society of United Irishmen : but I must venture to detain you a little longer, in order to state the intimacy of connexion, the identity of sentiments, opinions and conduct between the two bodies, called the catholic committee, and this society of United Irishmen. This catholic committee is composed of nine men and a secretary (whose names appear in their address to the papists of Ireland on the 23d of December 1794,) and it appeared to have emanated from the popish convention of 1792. A considerable number of the individuals who compose this committee are themselves members of the society of United Irishmen. The popish convention had in the year 1792 chosen for its secretary a gentleman of the name of Theobald Wolfe Tone ; he was an United Irishman, had acted at times as secretary to that body, and was introduced to the notice of the papists by the publication of a pamphlet written with some spirit in the year 1791, entitled "An Argument on behalf of the Catholics of Ireland." In this pamphlet the writer insists on the "abstract right of the people to reform the legislature." He declines however, to argue the point for this animated reason—"After Paire (said he) "who will, or who need be heard on the subject?" The object of the book is to shew the deplorable state of Ireland arising from her connexion with Great Britain ; to lament the humiliated state of his country in being without "ambassadors, army, or navy;"—to call the transactions of 1782 (which asserted the independency of the legislature of Ireland, but left, unfortunately in his opinion, the dependency of the crown untouched) "a bungling and imperfect business;"—to prove that if the papists are admitted into the legislature, a parliamentary reform must follow, and that such a reform, produced by such means, will "enable Ireland to exist as an independent state." He asserts that the circumstance of our existing as an independent state is an event that "infallibly must arise," and that by such means as he has pointed out we shall then be "as competent to our own government, regulation and defence, as any state in Europe." He talks of the "infinite resources and propitious vocations to independence which (he asserts) every hour brings forth to Ireland." He speaks of the National Assembly of France as "a body of representatives not of their constituents merely, but of man, whose nature they have exalted beyond the limits that even Providence seemed to have bounded it by;" and he assigns as the principal cause of the exalted splendour of that body "in that assembly protestants sit indiscriminately with catholics."

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—He adds, that, “ when he contrasts the National Assembly of France with other great bodies which he could name, he confesses he feels little propensity to boast that he has the honour to be an Irishman and a protestant.” And he closes by an address to the people of Ireland, in these words, “ Let them once cry *reform* and the *catholics*, and Ireland is *free, independent and happy.*” This Argument on behalf of the *catholics of Ireland*, of which, in fact, the various doctrines and addresses published by the United Irishmen are but an amplification, was circulated through Ireland with the name of Tone annexed to it. The principles contained in it were considered as a sufficient inducement to the popish convention to elect him their secretary, and to reward his services by a vote of 1500l. the whole of which I understand has been paid within these few days. To leave no doubt as to the reform which was to be the effect of catholic emancipation, the United Irishmen published and the papists adopted a specific plan of equal representation, consisting of twenty-three articles : the first of which was, “ that the nation, for the purpose of representation solely should be divided into 300 electorates, formed by combination of parishes, and as nearly as possible equal in point of population. The 9th article is, that every male of sound mind of the age of 21 years, who had maintained a family for six months in any electorate, should be entitled to vote for a representative.”—The last sentence of this production, is an emphatic call upon the peasants of Ireland, to hang this plan up in their cabbins—to think of it over and over again, and not to throw it by in despair.”—I have now gone through the series of provocatives prepared for the peasants of Ireland by the United Irishmen, adopted by the popish convention, and infused into the bosom of the lower, by the wealth and industry of some few among the higher classes of that religion. But it may be asked, did the papists adopt such doctrines? I answer by deducing my proof from the very centre of their own declarations. I hold in my hand, Sir, a letter, signed by a Mr. Thomas Braughal, in which he styles himself chairman of the *catholics of Dublin*, addressed to a Dr. Wm. Drennan, as chairman of the United Irishmen, and in the following words :

“ Sir, as chairman of the *catholics of Dublin*, I am ordered to transmit a copy of their proceedings on Wednesday, October 31; we trust you will find in that paper a *just reflection of your principles*, no less honourable to yourself than advantageous to the true interests of your country.—I am, Sir, &c.”

What those principles were of which the proceedings of the papists were a *just reflection*, I have already stated. If you would call before you a substantial image of the effects of those principles, look to the words of the king’s courts of justice: See one of the principals of this union outlawed, and another convicted on a charge of high treason; another outlawed for felony; others fined and imprisoned for slanderous libels; the society itself dispersed by the civil magistrates, and its papers seized. Can the papists deny a knowledge of the acts flowing from these principles? The flight and outlawry of Mr. Rowan and Mr. Tandy, were public: the im-

imprisonment of the others, and the dispersion of the society, were public: that Mr. Tone was involved in the treason of Doctor Jackson, was public: Since the month of June last, the indictment against Jackson, containing the paper of information to France, drawn by Tone, was public: yet, this very Mr. Tone, the papists, in the month of April last, attempt to adorn by their thanks, and actually rewarded with their money. But with a pretended three millions in the train of this committee—with a junction in persons and in principles with the United Irishmen—with defenders rising in every quarter of the kingdom—the wealthy plundered—the feeble and unresisting slaughtered, this papist committee were not hardy enough to venture the present proposition to parliament! They desired no more than the elective franchise; and in their proceedings of October 1792, they avowed that “they would satisfactorily acc^d quiesce in having the king, the house of peers, the house of com^m mons and the church of Ireland *exclusively protestant!*” To sustain them in the boldness of the present attempt, they wanted one junction more:—They wanted a junction with a lord lieutenant, who would be ready to agree with the king’s ministers to *postpone* a question which his friends here fomented and brought forward:—they wanted a junction with a minister, who would be ready to bring down the whole artillery of government, plant it on the walls of Francis-street chapel, and by the hands of a mob, batter the parliament of the kingdom:—they sought for that junction, and they found it! The men, whom (in their own words,) I have described to you, you have seen seated at the table, and known to be closetted in the council, of the very person whom you have also seen clothed in the robes and seated on the throne of your sovereign. In reviewing thus the facts and circumstances which have occurred from the year 1791, to this time, in comparing their connexions and their tendencies, you arrive at the true ground of this question; you discover the characters of the persons who urge it forward, and the ends to which their labours have been directed. It appears, that the year 1791 was a period when the nation was powerful and the government without embarrassment: The tone of the papists was then modest; their object was moderate—and they gave the instance of their having chosen a period of prosperity to urge their pretensions as the evidence of the justice of their claim, of their loyalty, and of their integrity. They were not even contented with general evidence of their conduct:—They added a solemn declaration of their principles.—They entered into an awful contract with their king and his parliament, and declared “that they ought to be considered as public foes who should urge such a claim at any other time than a time of public tranquillity.” They went still further: lest any doubt should be entertained of the extent of their views and the purity of their intentions, they published a solemn declaration of their wishes. On the 4th of February, 1792, they bounded by specific lines, and defined by specific terms, the extent and nature of their objects; they closed with their fellow subjects, and with the legislature for ever. But the splendid sun of imperial prosperity

sperity which had called forth this harvest of honour, generosity and good faith, was soon to set—the night of foreign war and domestic treason overspread the land: Then, in the hope that the darkness would conceal the crime, was this wholesome crop trodden under foot; then was sought for, with a profligate industry, every poisonous weed that the wealth and luxuriance of the time had unhappily given vigour to; then, instead of humble petitions and appeals to the liberality and wisdom of the legislature, were heard and seen illegal conventions illegally summoned; then did those conventions publish saucy invective against that constitution, of whose blessings they at the same instant sought the benefit; then did they call that *corrupt* by the intermixture with which they desired to purify and adorn themselves; then did they fling, with a vulgar malignity, opprobrious epithets at the heads of those very ministers whose wisdom they had before applauded, and to whose liberality they had bowed as grateful debtors; then, and not till then, was seen the horrible audacity of men, daring enough with one hand to hold out an humble petition beseeching the favour of a beneficent sovereign, and in the other hand grasping an union with the imprisoned libeller, the outlawed felon, and the convicted traitor; the horrible audacity of men claiming a right to repose in the arms of the constitution, and at the same instant applauding the disturbers of our peace, and consoling the traitor to our king. You have now seen the popish committee connected with the ministers of the crown, and leaders in parliament; you have seen that popish committee connected with the popish convention, and both connected with the Irish convention and Mr. Tone! Trained within the body of the United Irishmen, and issuing forth in substantial treason, you have seen “those clamorous harbingers of blood and death,” Mr. Hamilton Rowan, Mr. Tone, and Mr. Jackson; you have seen the sufferings of some criminals alleviated and the talents of others rewarded by subscriptions, raised by the efforts of those committees and conventions; you have seen the accomplice of treason secretary to popish delegates, laying a popish petition at the foot of the throne; you have seen connected by a long but unbroken chain (at a great distance I admit, and I am sure without any similarity of intention) the Minister and the traitor: Thus you have seen, Sir, the common experiment made on the subtlety of the common electric fluid; where, when the bar is charged with the elemental fire, if an hundred men were to join hands, the stroke will be communicated from the first to the last. Modern patriotism is to the mind as the elemental fire is to the body; and the shock which commences in the cell of Newgate, may terminate within the walls of parliament! But am I bold enough to accuse three millions of the king's subjects with cultivating such principles and holding such conduct? God forbid! Human nature, Sir, is not so depraved as that you could find in any climate, or under any government, three millions so lost to all sense of goodness. The million is always honest, always simple, it means its own happiness, and it has a right to pursue its own happiness. But to be led and

to follow is the inevitable nature of the million. The conduct and designs of the leaders, therefore, are the only sources of true information to the legislator. The wretched peasant, whose head is counted to swell this awful number, knows nothing of all this: He is called upon by his priest to subscribe, and he is told that Mr. Grattan is to relieve him from rent and wretchedness—The innocent man blesses Mr. Grattan, and subscribes the little produce of his sweat. The miserable dupe, plundered of his little earning, returns to his cottage—and sunk in repose, he dreams of nothing but less labour for himself, and more food and raiment for his children. But this innocent man, Sir, is under the guidance of such leaders, the more dangerous as he is the more innocent—I therefore deem it *inexpedient* to admit such leaders to any share of power. We should be the more careful, Sir, in a country where government seems to be the science of all—and obedience the habit of none.—But we are told by Lord Fitzwilliam, that “these men will rebel if we do not comply.” Why, Sir, if they will rebel—if their loyalty is so loose a cloak as to be thrown off in every contest for rank and power—let them rebel!—Is it not better they should rebel as they are, than that we should admit them to draw their swords in the presence of the throne itself, and let treason stalk within the walls of parliament? But the preamble to the bill asserts, not only that it is *expedient*, but that it is *right* to remove these restraints.—If by right is meant any such thing as *natural* right to political power, I will not argue with any man who holds such language: I know of no method so proper for his conviction, as the cell of Mr. Jackson in Ireland, or that of Tom Paine in France. But if by right is meant any claim to privilege springing from the particular constitution of this country, or from the general principles of civil society, I must take leave to examine a little into that constitution and those principles.

[Here Mr. Johnson entered into some detail of the British constitution, and what he called its excluding principle and connection with the protestant church, which began to take its present form in the reign of Elizabeth. He endeavoured to trace the effects of that principle and connection through the different periods of the British history. He called the attention of the house to the series of eminent men by whom it had been formed, extended and regulated.]

He concluded thus: “That excluding principle which established Elizabeth upon the throne, and in establishing her laid the foundation of that edifice which has astonished mankind—the British Empire; that principle which survived the mistaken perseverance of Charles the First, and the hypocritical tyranny of Cromwell; which bowed the hereditary dignity of James to the dust, and raised the cool sagacity of William to empire—which, in a happier hour, bound the fortunes of Britain and the house of Hanover together, and will continue to bind them for ever; that principle which was applied and interwoven into the British constitution by the prudent foresight of Sir William Cecil; which was adhered

adhered to by the wifest and honestest men in the parliaments of Charles the First and Second; which was seised and relied on as the safeguard of Britain by my Lord Somers and that conitellation of able men who, with him, produced the revolution; that principle which has been since adhered to by Mr. Pitt and Mr. Burke in the year 1790, was acknowledged by Mr. Fox in the year 1791, and has been hitherto admitted in Ireland by every man who now argues for its destruction; that excluding principle and protestant establishment, (to adopt a dictatorial term from a late manifesto—but to adopt it in a better cause), that excluding principle and protestant establishment *shall not be shaken by Mr. Byrne or Mr. Keogh, or any of their coadjutors.*"

The SECRETARY at WAR (Col. DOYLE). Having been the *first* in parliament who had declared myself in favour of the *total emancipation* of the catholic body, I feel it necessary to say a few words. I shall take up but a small portion of the time of the house at this late hour, having so frequently experienced its indulgence in speaking at large upon the subject.

When the catholic measure came first before parliament, I saw distinctly (after the best consideration I could give it) that true policy as well as justice required that the emancipation should be complete. I was convinced that the best method of uniting **ALL** descriptions of subjects in support of the constitution, was by giving **ALL** an **EQUAL** interest in its defence. I could not comprehend the idea of *fractional freedom* and making the catholic seven-eighths free.

I wished to remove those barriers which, by dividing our people, had so long weakened the energy of the nation.—I wished also to put the question at rest for ever: I thought it absurd to suppose the catholics would look no further; they were men, and must have the feelings and propensities of men;—and I know “That the “higher we ascend the hill, the more extended becomes the prospect.” If I were anxious to conciliate and unite all our people in defence of our King, our country, and our constitution, *at that time*, how much more so must I feel now: half measures are at no time good; at this moment they are ruinous.—I would give generously, and have *no craving void left aching in the breast.*

There are but three new arguments that have been urged against the measure. Some gentlemen say the extent of the gift would endanger church and state.—Other gentlemen say the catholics are unreasonable in contending for the trivial articles which remain to be granted. I shall leave these arguments to answer each other; only observing, that if little remains, it is less worth disputing, unless gentlemen are too generous to think of offering so small a present. The third argument is more serious; and if it could be proved, would very much alter my opinion. It is, that the present disturbances originate from the catholic body: Sir, no man regrets more than I do those disturbances; and no one would go further to punish those midnight plunderers;—but I think it as unwise as it is unfair to visit the crimes of a few of the most ignorant and ill-disposed upon the whole body. It is certainly probable

ble the present rioters are catholics, because the lower class in the country is, for the most part, catholic. In the riots in 1780 in London, the mob, which had nearly destroyed that capital, was composed exclusively of protestants; but no person ever imputed their guilt to the whole body of English protestants. If a riot happens at Constantinople, I think it is probable that the rioters would be found to be Turks; but I would not, therefore, burn the Koran, and punish the Divan. But there is another reason why I cannot believe it, in any degree, imputable to the catholic body, because I think it would be, to the last degree, absurd to suppose that they should endeavour by a political suicide, to overturn the constitution at the very instant they were soliciting to be admitted into it. Taking, therefore, into consideration, the whole of the arguments, as well as our actual situation, I am decidedly in favour of the measure, and shall give my vote for the committal of the bill.

Mr. O'CONNOR. I should not have trespassed on your time at this late hour, was it not that as often as this important subject has been agitated, since I had a seat in this house, I have contented myself with giving silent votes, for the most unqualified emancipation of my Catholic countrymen, and I have done so, from conviction of the justice of their claims to freedom, and of the inexpediency and folly of continuing to sacrifice the civil and political rights of the people, for the purpose of aggrandizing a few families, under the mask of promoting religion.—But, sir, the times call for something more than silent votes.—The situation in which we are so unaccountably placed, is so critical, and the bill, under your consideration, involves such consequences in its train, that every man who is not wholly indifferent to the welfare of his country, must feel himself called on, to lay aside every lesser consideration, and to deliver his opinion, with that freedom, and that boldness, by which only the country can be saved.

What do the whole of the arguments which have been advanced on this night against the emancipation of our Catholic countrymen by the gentlemen of the opposite side of the house amount to? To mere assertions that it would destroy our constitution in church and state. This is not the only instance in this country, in which the most egregious job has been concealed under a specious phraseology. One wou'd imagine from the language held by the right hon. gentleman (Mr. Pelham) that the people of this country were in the actual enjoyment of the British constitution in all its purity, and that it had been in this country, that the experiment of that constitution had been made, by which it has become the admiration of the world.—Is it that the condition of the people of Ireland corresponds so well with the great natural advantages of their country, that we are to infer, that their civil and political constitution, was of that immaculate nature, which the right hon. gentleman, (Mr. Pelham) has represented it? Is it because we were the most wretched, and the most miserable nation in Europe, as long as this system of monopoly and exclusion, for which the gentlemen on the opposite side of

of the house contend, under the title of constitution in state and church, was in its most entire state, and that we have emerged from that wretchedness and misery in an exact proportion, as we have destroyed this system of monopoly, by extending the blessings of freedom to our Catholic countrymen, that we should now desist from our labours? Is it because we have heard those gentlemen at the opposite side of the house, year after year, ever since this question has been agitated, predict the ruin of the country, from extending the constitution to our Catholic countrymen, and that we have seen the country thrive in an exact proportion as it has been extended; that we should now stop short on their authority, and consecrate the remainder of the system of monopoly and exclusion? Before we risk every thing in defence of a system, upon authority which has hitherto proved so utterly fallacious, let us enquire into its merits. I will suppose the worst of systems, and I will leave it to the advocates of this system, to shew, in what it differs from this system of theirs, which they have consecrated under the mystical words of constitution in church and state.—I will suppose the whole representation of the people of Ireland converted in a subject of traffic, and a monopoly of the trade given to a few families, with an exception of that small portion of freedom, which falls to the share of the counties.—I will suppose, even this pittance assailed by these monopolists, by their profuse distributions of jobs and of patronage, and by their appointing the men of the best interests in their several counties, for seats for their boroughs, whom they could find mean enough to accept them, on the condition of servitude and wages in so vile an occupation; I will suppose these wholesale dealers in our rights and liberties, coming from their rotten boroughs, and from the counties they had debauched with their attendant supporters of constitution in church and state, to discharge their cargo at the seat of government, at the counting-house of an English factor, bartering an unqualified sacrifice of Irish trade, of Irish industry, of Irish rights, and of Irish character, at the feet of English domination, and of English avarice. For what? What shall I suppose the price of this infernal cargo, like Pandora's box, a collection of every ill that can afflict mankind? The whole nation of Ireland would blush to hear it.—They would blush at their own degradation.—Nothing less than the most unqualified sacrifice of every thing in this unfortunate country that could exalt those Farmers General of our rights and liberties, and of every thing that could debase an injured, insulted, and impoverished people.—Here is a system by which our national character would be degraded in the eyes of surrounding nations. Here is a system by which the people of this country would be doubly impoverished, to pay for that treason which was to revile and villify them in the legislature of their own country, and to pay for that treason which was to sacrifice their dearest interest to the aggrandizement of another nation: *I call upon the gentlemen of the opposite side of the house, to shew in what this execrable system differs from the constitution in church and state, for which they contend.*—And yet it is on the continuance of this system you have been told your lives,

lives, your liberties, your properties, and your religion depend; it is on the continuance of this system you have been told your constitution depends—nay; to fill up the measures of their effrontery, there are men who will unblushingly tell you that this system so profitable to them, and so ruinous to their country, *shall be your constitution itself.*—Fortunately it is no longer a subject of contention between the Protestants and the Catholics, for every man in this country except monopolists, and those in pay of monopolists, whether Protestants, Presbyterians, or Catholics, have declared themselves equally interested in the destruction of this odious system.— Fortunately the Protestants and Presbyterians of Ireland have at length discovered the folly of sacrificing their own rights, and the prosperity of their country, in a criminal attempt to exclude three-fourths of their countrymen from the blessings of freedom, for no other purpose than to perpetuate a system, in which a few families are unnaturally exalted at the expence of millions of their countrymen, as unnaturally debased.—But it is no longer a secret that the men who oppose the abolition of religious distinctions in our civil and political concerns, when the general voice of the nation has concurred in so wise, so just, and so politic a measure, are the men who usurp the whole political power of the country, the men who have converted the whole representation of Ireland into family patrimony:—to the poverty, to the oppression, and to the disgrace of the nation, and to the monstrous aggrandizement of themselves, their relatives, and their servile adherents.—*These are the men who oppose Catholic Emancipation*—and why?—Because Catholic emancipation would be incompatible with their accursed monopoly.—Here lies the incapacity of the Catholics to participate in the freedom of their country; here lies the *excellence* of the present constitution in church and state.—In this is comprised the whole guilt of our Catholic countrymen, and in the eyes of men of this description, the same incapacity would attach itself to angels from heaven, if the abolition of their accursed monopoly was to make any part of the consequence.—Let those men who flatter themselves that they will be able to continue the old system of monopoly and exclusion, by which the few are raised on the necks of the many, risk what they please in its defence.—But let me conjure you, who are without the pale of their political communion, to consider the important change which has taken place in the public mind, to consider the language which has been spoken by all descriptions of men, from one end of the kingdom to the other.—Let me conjure you to consider that you are no longer legislating for the barbarous ignorant ages which are gone by, but that you must now legislate for the more enlightened and the more intelligent age in which you live, and for the still more enlightened ages which are to come.—It is on these safe and liberal grounds I invite you to weigh the arguments which have been advanced on this night against the emancipation of your Catholic countrymen.—An Hon. Gent. [Mr. Ogle] says, if you emancipate them, they will get the upper hand, and that they will erect a

Popish government;—and a noble Lord [Lord Kingsborough] says, that Catholic emancipation is incompatible with Protestant freedom, which assertions are founded on the supposition that the Catholics pay such implicit obedience to their clergy in religious matters, that they will destroy our liberties by paying the like implicit obedience to the civil magistrate in political concerns.—Is there any thing in the conduct of the Catholics at this day, to warrant these charges?—Is it not harrowing up charges from the barbarous ages that are gone by?—Ask the Catholic clergy, and they will tell you that their power has declined.—Ask the Protestant gentry from one end of the country to the other, and they will tell you that the superstitious power of the catholic clergy is at an end. But have you not heard the right hon. gent. [Mr. Pelham] on this night lament the decline of this power?—have you not heard him in the vilest prostitution of terms lament its decline, as the decline of a wholesome controul—whilst it is with joy I express my satisfaction, that all superstitious controul over the minds of my catholic countrymen is at an end, as that circumstance, which puts the justice of their claims to freedom beyond all doubt, I cannot, nor will not, suppress my detestation and abhorrence of the right hon. gentleman's [Mr. Pelham's] doctrine, which would make a superstitious a wholesome controul.—As this doctrine of passive obedience, which would revive the reign of ignorance and superstition, is the doctrine of some despots, who having some infernal system of oppression to support, and shrinking from the light of reason, would re-plunge us into that darkness and obscurity we have escaped—backed then by the authority of the catholic clergy, backed by the authority of the protestant gentry, and backed by the still more general authority of the general observation of every man within and without these walls, from one end of the kingdom to the other,—I will assume it as a fact, that the superstitious controul of the catholic clergy over the catholic mind is at an end. What becomes of the insecurity of the protestants from the catholics sacrificing your liberties by paying a like implicit obedience to the civil magistrates? Is there any thing like this in the conduct of the catholics? Has the hon. gent. and the noble lord who have made these charges, found the catholics so criminally indifferent to the blessings of civil and political liberty?—Have those gentlemen who have left no *secret means* untried to defeat catholic freedom, found them so criminally tame and submissive under the pressure of civil and political exclusion? Is it a fact that the catholic laity have been so slack and so backward in the pursuit of civil and political liberty, as to require the incitement of their clergy? Or is it the characteristic of the clergy of any religion to be very ardent in the pursuit after civil and political liberty?—I put it to the gentlemen at the opposite side of the house, does the current of public opinion at this time in any nation in Europe, run in favour of despotism, or of popery, or of popish government?—But these gentlemen do not perceive the contradictory nature of the arguments they have this night advanced against catholic freedom.—At one time they represent them as a

set of men so priest-ridden, as to endanger the constitution, by erecting a popish slavish government; in the same breath they represent them as overthrowing the constitution by their democratical and republican principles, serving up at the same instant the most heterogeneous compositions that were ever offered to the human mind. But I refer those gentlemen to the history of mankind, where they will find that the men who have been really and dangerously priest-ridden, have invariably borne the yoke of civil and religious despotism with patience and resignation, but that whenever they had assumed sufficient courage to assert their civil and political rights, it was not until after they had thrown off the tyranny of the priesthood.—Reasoning from this indisputable fact, instead of agreeing with the gentlemen opposite, that the firm tone in which the catholics had demanded their freedom, should be a ground for refusal—I shall ask no better proof that they are entitled to liberty, than their having had the spirit to claim it.

But the gentlemen on the other side of the house knowing the weakness of these contradictory arguments, have had recourse to prophecy. They have entrenched themselves in the fastnesses of futurity, and in the spirit of divination they have accused us, who are advocates for catholic freedom, with the ruin of posterity. To this prophetic accusation I answer, as far as a prophetic accusation admits of an answer, that the dark ages of ignorance and superstition have ever proved congenial to the tyranny of priests and despots---but that the independence which has arisen from the intercourse of nation with nation---from the invention of the mariner's compass, and the knowledge which has flowed from the invention of the press, have proved fatal to its continuance. Look round the world and you will find in those countries where foreign commerce is discouraged, and where the invention of the press is unknown, that despotism uniformly prevails over liberty:—look to China and the East Indies; look to Persia---to the Ottoman and the African empires---those immense portions of the globe, where foreign commerce is discouraged, and where the invention of the press is either disused or unknown---and you will find the civil and political rights of the people immersed in ignorance, superstition, and abject servility---the sport of the most rapacious despotism. In these countries the ears of the governing powers are never grated with the harsh sounds of the rights of man ---no; all is despotism on the part of the governors, all is passive obedience on the part of the people. Turn your eyes from these wretched countries to the several nations of Europe, and you will find how uniformly civil, political, and religious liberty, have taken place of civil, political and religious slavery, in proportion as foreign commerce has been encouraged, and as the press has been protected. See how uniformly these causes and effects correspond---and if any one of you doubt that these great causes are at this moment operating those salutary effects, I refer him to the despots of Europe, and this war in which they have immolated so many human sacrifices, and in which they have deluged all Europe with such torrents of blood, and their present fears for their darling

darling despotism, shall be their answers. But it is some consolation to me to reflect, that the avarice of these despots, which has tempted them to encourage foreign commerce in their dominions, and the vanity or necessity which has led them, or obliged them to give some protection to education and the press, is at this moment sowing the seeds of that independence and knowledge which will one day crush that despotism even which they and their blood-hounds have disgraced.—Impressed with these great and important truths, is it when our country is becoming commercial under all its artificial disadvantages;—is it when we have thrown off some of the shackles of our trade, and when by passing this bill, by creating a people, we shall be enabled to restore it to perfect freedom, that we are to reject this bill through the fear of destroying posterity? Is it when knowledge is progressive amongst us, when the youth of the nation are giving such brilliant examples that liberality of thought is the offspring of education? Is it when our catholic countrymen are displaying such eminent talents, in the pursuit after civil and political liberty; talents which I am sorry to say we have had many examples this night to prove how much more easy it is to vilify than to rival or imitate? Is it under these circumstances that we are to entertain fears for posterity? Is it when our countrymen have resumed their reason in such an eminent degree, that we should suspect them of relapsing into ignorance and superstition? Is it when our catholic countrymen are claiming their civil and political rights, with the address and firmness of men of enlightened minds, that we should suspect them of relapsing into slavery and a Popish government, basely surrendering the noblest privileges of man? Never shall such tinsel reasonings make me see the ruin of my country in the actual *freedom* of my countrymen;—never shall such weak arguments dissuade me from an act of immutable justice, where the rights and liberties of millions of my countrymen were at stake upon the issue:—No; on this head the prospect is a bright one, and accursed be that man who, for interested motives, would darken or obscure its lustre.

So much for the danger of the constitution in state---but the church is in danger. What is that part of the system to which the protestant religion is under such obligations? What is that part of the system with whose destruction, the destruction of the protestant religion is so closely connected? It is simply the system of conversion—but is it a system of conversion from conviction? No: it shuts every avenue leading to conviction;—it closes every door by which a catholic could enter the protestant church—they have been barraged by those rewards and punishments which short-sighted bigotry invented for the purpose of forcing religious opinions. By this system you have exposed the catholic who is willing to follow the dictates of conviction, to the execration of his own sect for deserting them, because he appears to have done so, to escape the penalties annexed to adherence; and you have exposed him to the contempt of the protestants, whose tenets you wish him to embrace,

brace, by making him appear to them as a man who had sold his principles, his religion, and his *God*—for no other purpose than to gain the immunities you hold out to conversion;—so that instead of promoting your religion—you have called forth the dread of execration and contempt to steel the catholic mind against that conversion you affect to promote, and to attach him to that religion from which you wish to estrange him.

Thus it is with narrow-minded bigotry, ever defeating its own ends by the means it employs to attain them.—You have not its heats nor its passions to excuse you, but you have had the experience of its example to direct you; cease, then, to prescribe to the Almighty the extent and manner of the adoration he shall receive; cease to place your rewards and punishments in competition with his, for you cannot but observe how thoroughly the blasphemous presumption has exposed the impotency of the attempt.—Act like legislators; leave the way to conviction and conversion as free and as open as the superiority of the tenets of your religion appears to you clear and indisputable: act like men sensible of their duty to your creator, and presume not to meddle with opinions he has not given you faculties to understand, and which require his omniscience to controul: away with that system which exacts the sacrifice of the civil and political rights of the people, for the ineffectual purpose of promoting religion; we have tried it long enough in this unfortunate country to prove its inefficacy; it has had free scope amongst us ever since the passing the law against recusants in the reign of Eliz. until within these few years that we have begun on its abolition; and if you would judge fairly of the merits of the system, and of its abolition by their effects, I call on you, on this night, to choose between centuries of disunion, of civil wars, and of wretchedness unexampled in any nation of the globe, and a few years rapid progress in union, in civilization, and in the industry of the people.—But I find it is not enough to have combated their last objection in its own shape; it is not enough that I have proved to you that you have not promoted your religion by this system of persecution; for in opposition to the professions of the tolerant principles of those gentlemen who oppose this bill, I do assert that every the least disability on account of religious opinions, makes part of the system of persecution.—The objection makes its appearance in another shape, and the dangers which were said to threaten the protestant religion from catholic emancipation, have been made by a right hon. gentleman [Mr. Pelham] to re-appear in the shape of dangers which he says threaten the protestant establishment.—He has confounded the establishment with the religion, and by an artful transmigration, he has made the establishment to stand for the soul of the protestant religion; and after we have defeated the objection under the colours of the one, he has made it to rally, Antæus like, with additional strength, under the colours of the other; I say with additional strength, for I am aware that protestant establishment is a word of that mystical meaning in this house, that those who would wish to retain it in that state of consecration

separation in which it has been placed by the priesthood in the days of our most inveterate bigotry, have a considerable advantage over me, who would examine its meaning before the tribunal of reason; it is their interest to confound the establishment with your religion, in order that it may derive all the sanctity of the religion itself, it is mine to separate them; but they may as well attempt to confound the military establishment, by which the officers and soldiers are paid, with the tactics and manœuvres which it is their duty to learn.

In order to answer the last objection, it will be necessary to prove that the protestant establishment would undergo no alteration from the emancipation of the catholics, or that if it was to undergo an alteration, the protestant religion, so far from being injured, would be highly benefited by the change.—And I prefer ~~for~~ the latter, because I believe, in my soul, that if some very material alteration be not speedily made in our religious establishments, there will be an end very speedily not only to all religion amongst us, but to all moral principle without which religion is a farce.—As the legislature of this country have been mistaken in their attempt to promote religion by their system of persecution, so also they have been utterly mistaken in the nature and effects of religious establishments, they have confounded the interest of the clergy, with the interest of religion, and they imagined, that, in proportion as they enriched the protestant clergy, they were promoting the protestant religion; and that, by dooming the catholic clergy to have no establishment whatsoever, they were consigning the catholic religion to eternal oblivion.—Was I on a subject upon which I could expect any share of candour, I would rest the whole argument on the fact, I would ask has the protestant religion been promoted in proportion as the protestant clergy have been enriched? Have the numbers of the catholic religion diminished according to the views of the legislature who doomed their clergy to poverty, and to have no establishment at all? The state of the population of the two sects is sufficiently well known to prove that the reverse is the fact; and if you will examine the nature of the establishments, you will discover which is best adapted to the purpose of promoting their respective religions.—From that absurd notion of promoting religion, by enriching its clergy, the protestant establishment has made men of fortune of its clergy; it has made them to live with men of fortune, and to live as men of fortune; it has induced them to live with men of fashion, with men of pleasure, and with men of the world; and it has made them to live as men of fashion—as men of pleasure—and as men of the world; it has thrown them entirely into that class of men whose education, whose high sense of honour, and whose respect for the opinion of an observant world, renders the attendance of a minister of religion almost unnecessary; but it has taken them from the dull, but useful, rounds of parochial duties—it has estranged them from cultivating a friendly and intimate acquaintance with the lower classes of the people—whose want of education, whose want of a sense of honour—and whose ignorance of moral obligation

gation—makes the constant and friendly attendance of a minister of religion indispensably necessary to keep them from falling into irreligion—and to keep them from that vice and debauchery which, unsupported by any fund than that of their labour and their industry, which it would shortly consume, must make them bad subjects under any government, must lead to pilfering and punishment, perhaps to robbery and murder, and to a disgracefull death.—By this establishment you have raised excessive hopes of preferment in the minds of the clergy, from the inequalities it has left in the provisions which it makes for them, by which their characters have been subjected to the imputation of cringings, and servility to the dispensers of patronage, to the meanly sacrificing their civil and political rights and opinions upon the altar of an earthly superior, by which they appear, in the eyes of the people, as men either disregarding or disbelieving that leading and essential tenet of the christian religion, which forbids the sacrifice of their duty to their worldly promotion.—Injurious as these defects in this establishment, for which such fears are entertained, have proved to your religion, they almost vanish when I come to consider the evils which arise from the mode of payment which it allots its clergy.—I should not dwell on how destructive this part of the establishment has proved to the agriculture of your country, the most important branch of industry in which your people can be employed; I shall confine myself to state, that it has sown the seeds of eternal rancour, animosity, and litigation, between the minister and his parishioners; it has allied the minister of the meek and charitable religion of Christ with the very dregs of the earth; it has made him one in a company with valuator, with proctors, with process servers, and with civil bill attorneys; it has made him the principal suitor in that hell upon earth the civil bill court, where perjury is all prevalent; it has converted the minister of the disinterested religion of Christ into a tithe-setting auctioneer, distributing his liquors, in order to intoxicate his bidders, that they may vie with one another for the purchase of his wares; it has made them appear the most avaricious, and the greatest persecutors, who, by the tenets of the religion it is their duty to inculcate, should be the most disinterested, and least worldly; it has made it appear to the world as if this establishment was instituted to make the people sensible of their indigence, by a comparison with the wealth of their clergy; to make them sensible of their own wants, by a comparison with the abundance in the hands of their clergy; to make them sensible how miserably their hard labour was rewarded by a comparison with the indolence, but immense and sudden fortunes, of their clergy: It has made it appear to the world, as if their establishment was for no other purpose instituted in this country, than to provide exorbitantly for the families and connexions of the political jobbers, and political advocates for the constitution, in church and state, in its present limited condition—and it has made it appear to the world, as if your protestant religion had no other busineſs in your country than to support this establishment, and not the establishment to support the

the religion. Turn your eyes to that establishment which you have forced on the catholic religion, with a view to its abolition : you have not enabled its clergy to mock the simplicity of the Christian religion by the splendour of their equipage, by the magnificence of their palaces, their furniture, or their side-boards, by the massiness of their plate, nor by the voluptuousness or luxury of their tables ;—you have not tempted them, for you have not enabled them, to desert their parishes and their religious duties, in search of pleasure at Bath, at London, in your capital, at the water-drinking places, the resort of the fashionable. No ; you have apportioned their salaries to the discharge of their duty, and you have called out the strongest incitements in man—the procuring a subsistence, and the hopes of bettering their condition, to stimulate them to the most active discharge of their duty. I am not the advocate for either establishment ;—for I am as averse to that establishment which, by its enormity, sets the clergy above the discharge of their religious duty, as I am to the establishment which, by obliging the clergy to humour the weakness, or to encourage the ignorance of his parishioners, as the only means of procuring a subsistence, makes it an office beneath a man of education.

But I cannot but observe, you have an example in your country of an establishment by which a greater number than those of the established religion are carefully and diligently instructed in their religious duties, by a resident clergy, of the purest morals, the most decorous manners, and of the greatest learning, between whom and their parishioners the greatest amity and affection subsist ; and not the fifteenth part as burdensome to the nation as your protestant establishment. I am aware that in the eyes of weak and timid men, who subscribe to the doctrine, that reformation is the parent of revolution, I shall appear as one who has entered on a delicate subject with too much freedom ; as a dangerous man, as a Jacobin, as one that would embrue my hands in the blood of my countrymen.—But I will appeal from such contemptible decision to the founder judgment of those who subscribe to the safer doctrine, that abuses are the parent of revolution—and that a timely and rational reform of those abuses, as well in church and state, are the only security against those convulsions, which shake society to its foundation.—In the eyes of these men I shall, I trust, appear as one braving the calumny of a great corporation in the discharge of my duty—an eye witness to the horrors of a revolution in another country, I must be more than monster to wish to see them raging in my own.—But if ever there was a time when it behoved men in public station to be explicit ;—if ever there was a time when those scourges of the human race called politicians should lay aside their duplicity and their finesse, it is the present moment.—Be assured the people of this country will no longer bear that their welfare should be made the sport of a few family factions ; be assured they are convinced their true interest consists in putting down men of self-creation, who have no object in view but that of aggrandizing themselves and their families, at the expence of the public—in setting up men who shall represent the nation,

nation, who shall be accountable to the nation, and who shall do the business of the nation; and if I could bring my mind to suspect that my catholic countrymen, after they had been embodied on the constitution, amidst their protestant and presbyterian fellow-citizens, would basely desert the common cause of our general freedom, I should conceive that, in having been the advocate of their emancipation, I had been the advocate of their disgrace.—But honour, interest, and the rising spirit of the nation, forbid such unworthy suspicions.—If I was to judge by the dead silence with which this is received, I should suspect what I have said was not very palatable to some men in the house; but I have not risked connections endeared to me by every tie of blood and friendship, to support one set of men in preference to another: I have hazarded too much to allow the breath of calumny to taint the object I have had in view from the part I have taken.—Immutable principles, on which the happiness and liberty of my countrymen depend, convey to my mind, the only substantial boon for which great sacrifices should be made.—I might allay the fears of the protestant monopolists for what, in the true spirit of political bigotry, they call their protestant ascendancy, by stating, that as the boroughs continue in the hands of the present protestant proprietors, centuries must pass away before the catholics can participate, in any considerable portion, of the political power of their country.—I am contending for the purity of the constitution, not for its abuses. I disclaim contending for catholic freedom, in the hope that the grant may be a dead letter; I disclaim contending for catholic freedom, in the hope that the rights and liberties of my country may continue to be monopolized the same manner after their emancipation they were before.—*But I here avow myself the zealous and earnest advocate for the most unqualified emancipation of my catholic countrymen, in the hope and conviction that the monopoly of the rights and liberties of my country, which has hitherto effectually withheld the efforts of a part of the people, must yield to the unanimous will, to the decided interest, and to the general effort of a whole united people;* it is from this conviction, and it is for that transcendantly important object, that (while the noble lord and right hon. sec. are offering to risk their lives and fortunes in support of a system that militates against the liberty of my countrymen,) I will risk every thing dear to me on earth; it is for this great object I have I fear more than risked connections dearer to me than itself; but he must be a spiritless man, and we must be a spiritless nation, if we do not resent the baseness of a British minister, who has raised our hopes in order to seduce a rival to share with him the disgrace of this accursed political crusade, and blasts them after, that he may degrade a competitor, to the station of a dependant, and that he may destroy friendship his nature never knew; he has sported with the feelings of a whole nation, raising the cup with one hand to the parched lip of expectancy, he has dashed it to the earth with the other, in all the wantonness of insult, and with all the aggravation of contempt. Does he imagine that the people of this country, after he has tantalized them with the cheering hope of

of present alleviation and of future prosperity, will tamely bear to be forced to a re-endurance of their former sufferings, and to a re-appointment of their former spoilers; does he, from confidence of long success in debauching the human mind, exact from you, calling yourselves representatives of the people of Ireland, to reject a bill, which has received the unanimous consent of your constituents; or does he mean to puzzle the versatile disposition of this house, on which he has made so many successful experiments already, by distracting you between obedience to his imperious mandates, and obedience to the will of the people you should represent; or does he flatter himself that because he has succeeded in betraying his own country into exchanging that peace, by which she may have retrieved her shattered finances, for a war, in which he has squandered twenty times a greater treasure in the course of two years, than he, with all his famed œconomy, could save in the course of ten—for a war in which the flower of the youth of the world have been offered up the victims to his ambition and his schemes, as boundless and presumptuous as ill concerted and ill combined, for a war in which the plains of every nation in Europe have been crimsoned with oceans of blood—for a war in which his country has reaped nothing but disgrace, and which must ultimately prove her ruin? Does he flatter himself, that he will be enabled, Satan like, to end his political career, by involving the whole empire in a civil war, from which nothing can accrue but a doleful and barren conquest to the victor? I trust the people of England are too wise and too just to attempt to force measures upon us, they would reject with disdain themselves; I trust they have not so soon forgotten the lesson they so recently learned from America, which should serve as a lasting example to nations, against employing force to subdue the spirit of a people *determined to be free*; but if they should be so weak or so wicked as to suffer themselves to be seduced by a man, to whose foul duplicity and finesse is as congenial, as ingenuousness and fair dealing is a stranger, to become the instruments of supporting *a few odious public characters in power and rapacity against the interest and against the sense of a whole people*—if we are to be dragooned into measures against our will, by a nation that would lose her last life and expend her last guinea in resenting a similar insult if offered to herself—I trust in God she will find in the people of this country a spirit, in no wise inferior to her own.—You are at this moment at the most awful period of your lives: the minister of England has committed you with your country, and on this night your adoption or rejection of this bill must determine in the eyes of the Irish nation, which you represent, the minister of England, or the people of Ireland: and although you are convinced you do not represent the people of Ireland—although you are convinced every man of you, that you are self-created, it does not alter the nature of the contest, it is still a contest between the minister of England and the people of Ireland; and the weakness of your title should only make you the more circumspect in the exercise of your power—obey the British minister—disregard the voice of the people. France must have lost her senses

if she hesitates what part she will take; it is not an eighty-fourth department you will have moulded to *her* wishes; it is not simply a La Vendee you will have kindled in the bosom of *your* country.—For if you shall have once convinced the people of this country that you are *traitors to them, and hirelings to the minister of an avaricious domineering nation*—under the outward appearance of a sister country;—if you shall have convinced the people of this country, that the free national constitution, for which they were committed, and for which they risked every thing dear to them in 1782, has been destroyed by the bribery of a British minister, and the unexampled venality of an Irish parliament;—if you shall have convinced them, that instead of rising or falling with England, they are never to rise, but when she has been humbled by adversity, and that they must fall when she becomes elated by prosperity;—if you shall have convinced the people of this country that instead of reciprocal advantage, nothing is to be reaped from their connexion with England, but supremacy and aggrandizement on the one side, and a costly venality, injury, insult, degradation, and poverty on the other—it is human nature that you shall have driven the people of this country to court the alliance of any nation, able and willing to break the chains of a bondage not more galling to their feelings than *restrictive of their prosperity*.—The gentlemen at the opposite side of the house have attempted to influence you by the mention of Jackson—so will I—Read the correspondence of that traitor with your enemy, and you will find a volume of instruction in every line that he has written.—If the people of this country do enjoy the constitution in church and state—why has that traitor found the people of the one country free from that oppression which goads nations into all the horrors of revolution?—Why has he found the people of the other so highly sublimate to his purpose?—Examine the whole of his intelligence and you will find the weakness of your country in the conduct you have pursued, and in the converse of that conduct only you can establish her strength.—Do not depend on the bayonet for the support of your measures; believe me that in proportion as your measures require force to support them, in an exact proportion are they radically and mischievously bad; believe me there is more strength in the affections and confidence of the people, than if you were to convert every second house in the nation into barracks for your soldiery; and when the gentlemen [Mr. Cuffe and Ld. Kingsborough] whom I have heard this night tell you, that to act in contempt of the public opinion, is spirit and firmness, and that to act with a decent respect for that opinion, is timidity and cowardice—they make the character of the legislator to merge into the character of the duellist, and they set you upon splitting points of honour with your constituents; is it not enough that you live in the age, and in midst of the horrors of revolution, to deter you from acting in contempt of the public opinion? Have you not had examples enough to convince you, that men, in throwing off the russet frock for the uniform of the soldier, do not at all times, throw away the ties of kindred and of blood?

blood? Have you not had examples enough to convince you, that even soldiers cannot at all times be brought to shed the blood of their parents, their kindred, and their friends? And have you not had a great and memorable example to convince you that the soldiers of an odious government may become the soldiers of the nation? If these are plain truths, this is the time to tell them; if I speak daggers to you, it is that neither you nor my country may ever feel them; *but if you wish to be deceived—hearken to those men who are interested in risking every thing, that they may continue to monopolize the whole political power of your country;—hearken to those men who are interested in risking every thing that may continue to draw their better inheritance from the sale of the welfare of your country;*—but let me caution you, whose property is too considerable to be hazarded in the base pursuit, after the rights and property of your enslaved and impoverished countrymen, to take care what part you act on this night; let me caution you that the decision of this night goes much farther than even the important bill under your consideration. You, none of you, can be ignorant that the British minister has designs in procrastinating this question—that he may gain advantages for his own country, at the expence of yours, greater than she was capable of receiving ‘*since the revolution, at least since the union,*’ and so strongly impressed is this on the public mind, that you who shall on this night vote for the rejection of this bill, will appear in the eyes of the Irish nation, not only as men voting in obedience to the British minister against the voice of the people, but as men voting for an *union with England*, by which this country is to be everlastingely reduced to the state of an abject province;—fortunately the views of the British minister have been detected; fortunately the people of this country see him in his true colours, like the desperate gamester who has lost his all in the widest schemes of aggrandizement, he looks round for some dupe, to supply him with the further means of future projects, and in the crafty subtleness of his soul, he fondly imagines he has found that easy dupe in the credulity of the Irish nation; after he has exhausted his own country in a crusade against the phantom of political opinion, he flatters himself he will be enabled to resuscitate her at the expence of yours.

As you value the peace and happiness of your country;—as you value the rights and liberties of that soil that has given you birth;—and, if you are not lost to every sense of feeling for your own consequence and importance as men, I call on you on this night to make your stand; I call on you to rally round the independence of your country, whose existence has been so artfully assailed—Believe me the British minister will leave you in the lurch, when he sees that the people of this nation are *too much in earnest* to be tricked out of their rights, or the independence of their country; after he sees that they have been sufficiently alarmed at seeing the same men who uniformly opposed the independence of their country, when it was a question in this house in the year 1782, recalled into power, when that independence was to be attacked in 1795; when he has gained his ends;

ends of you, and when he has made you the instruments by which he shall have so divided and disgraced the opposition of England, as to render it impossible to form an efficient government out of his opponents, he will make his peace with your country by conceding this measure, leaving you—"fixed figures for the hand of scorn to point its blow and moving finger at."—Good God! that you should fall into that very error which has so recently overwhelmed a great nation in such unheard-of calamities!—Will you not take warning from the fate of the government of France, which by not adapting its conduct to the changes of the public mind, has brought ruin on itself, and destruction on its country? What a display of legislation have we had on this night—artificers who neither know the foundation on which they work—the instruments they ought to use—nor the materials they ought to form!—Is it on the narrow basis of monopoly and exclusion you would erect a temple to the growing liberty of your country?—Is it by foreign troops you would lead the ardent spirit of your countrymen? Is it in the fusty records of barbarous ages you would seek for that existent mind to which you should adopt your laws? If you will legislate, know, that on the broad basis of immutable justice only, you can raise a lasting beautiful temple to the liberty of your island, whose ample pate shall lodge, and whose roof shall shelter her united family from the rankling inclemency of rejection and exclusion.—Know that reason is that silken thread by which the lawgiver leads his people; and, above all, know, that in the knowledge of the temper of the public mind, consists the skill and the wisdom of the legislator. Do not imagine that the mind of your countrymen has been stationary, while that of all Europe has been so rapidly progressive, for you must be blind not to perceive that the whole European mind has undergone a revolution, neither confined to this, nor to that country, but as general as the great causes which have given it birth, and still continue to feed its growth. In vain do those men, who subsist but on the abuses of the government under which they live, flatter themselves, that what we have seen these last six years, is but the fever of the moment, which will pass away as soon as the patient has been let blood enough; as well may they attempt to alter the course of nature, without altering her laws: if they would effect a counter-revolution in the European mind, they must destroy commerce and its effects—they must abolish every trace of the mariner's compass—they must consign every book to the flames—they must obliterate every vestige of the invention of the press, and they must destroy the conduit of intelligence, by destroying the institution of the post-office; then, and not until then, they, and their abuses may live on, in all the security which ignorance, superstition, and want of concert in the people can bestow.—But while I would overwhelm with despair those men who have been nursed in the lap of venality and prostitution;—who have been educated in contempt and ridicule of a love for their country, and who have grown grey in scoffing at every thing like public spirit—let me congratulate every true friend to mankind, that *commerce*, which has begat so much independence,

will

will continue to beget more; and let me congratulate every friend to the human species, that the *priest*, which has sent such a mass of information into the world, will continue, with accelerated rapidity, to pour forth its treasures, so beneficial to mankind. It is to these great causes we are indebted, that the combination of *priests and despots*, which so long tyrannized over the civil and political liberty of Europe—*has been dissolved*—it is to these great causes we are indebted, that no priest, be his religion what it may, dare preach the doctrine; and that no man believes the doctrine which inculcates the necessity of sacrificing every right and every blessing this world can afford, as the only means of attaining eternal happiness in the life to come.

This was the doctrine by which the despotism of Europe was so long supported; this was the doctrine by which the political popery of Europe was supported; but the doctrine and the despotism may now sleep in the same grave, until the trumpet of ignorance, superstition, and bigotry, shall sound their resurrection!—Thanks be to God, the European mind demands more substantial food than the airy nothing of metaphysical belief;—thanks be to God, the absurdity of one set of men framing *opinions* for other men to *believe*, upon a subject which neither have faculties to *understand*, has been exploded; and that every heart, and every mind, is anxiously engaged in perfecting a civil and political code, which, as it is within the scope, so it is the most important concern to every nation on the globe; and so far from believing they would earn Heaven by a base dereliction of their rights, they are firmly convinced, that in promoting the true, civil, and political rights of man, they are advancing human society to that state of perfection it was the design of the Creator it should attain, convinced that the *cause of Freedom is the cause of God*.

Mr. BARRINGTON rose, he said, to defend the Protestant establishment of Ireland; and convinced as he was that the adoption of Catholic claims must be fatal to Protestant government, he would not hesitate to give the bill, however plausible and popular, his most strenuous opposition; but he wished not to have his principles misconstrued or misunderstood; he wished not to embellish the shrine of Protestant freedom with the spoils of Catholic liberty—to tear away the rights of the Dissenter, in order to grace the trophy of the Reformist—or for an instant suspend the liberty of the one, to gratify the ambition of the other: these were not his principles; but invariably attached to the principles of the glorious Revolution—a limited Monarchy and Protestant hereditary succession; and determined to support those principles in their purity and extent, he would willingly give unqualified toleration to every religious sect, but would limit every political association. He wished conclusively to define the political rights of the Irish Catholic, and finally to ascertain and seat his claims and his authority *within the pale of liberty, but without the circle of legislation*. But whilst the Catholic principle avows a foreign supremacy within this realm, and whilst the Catholic considers as a grievance, and refuses to adopt

adopt those obligations through which the loyal Protestant conveys his allegiance to the foot of his monarch, whilst he renders his ~~feet~~, rather the characteristic of his politics than of his religion, the Irish Catholic cannot be trusted with political power ; he must relinquish the shackles of foreign subjection for the ties of domestic obedience, before he can safely be suffered to participate the power of a Protestant parliament, or we can safely surrender the ascendancy of a Protestant legislature. The religion of the Catholic forms them into a great and distinct political association :— by their former practice and their present principles, equally unadapted to give stability to our constitution, or be entrusted with the power of the country : formerly the slaves and bigots of unrestrained monarchy and monkish government, now the open and zealous partizans of foreign principles and undefined democracy. When we reflect that this principle of foreign ecclesiastical supremacy has ever been their cloak or their apology for temporal turbulence ; and having, in subjection, perpetually attempted the ruin of British connexion—become tyrants when they thought they had accomplished their purpose—shall the Protestant coolly and with open eyes surrender that power for which he has so often struggled ? Can the parliament of Ireland, an apostate from its avowed principles and its duty to a Protestant crown, foolishly assign its authority and ascendancy in the State to the hands of Catholic agitators, that it may afterwards have the humble gratification of suing their bounty for a permissive participation of the very same rights and very same powers which our mistaken generosity had just induced us to relinquish ? 'Tis vain to say that the interest of the Catholic and the Protestant can ever incorporate—the Catholic composed of three millions, the Protestant of one : Protestant power, and Protestant property, can alone balance Catholic population ; and if the Protestant participates his political power with the Catholic, three-fourths of the power united with three-fourths of the population, will soon be strong enough to claim and resume nine-tenths of the property. If the Catholic possesses the power, will it be his interest to suffer that property to remain in the hands of the Protestant—a property which they only consider as vested by the tyranny of forfeiture—and to which they have never failed to keep alive perpetual claims ?—No : The temptation would be too great, and the power too strong to be resisted. Why did the Catholics in 1791 procure a map of the old forfeitures, to be made by a subscription among themselves ? Was it for the purpose of gratifying their reflection with what they had lost ? or pleasing their imagination with the idea of what they might regain ? A regular system has been formed, and has as yet been strictly and too successfully pursued by their advocates ; they have the power of voting for members of the legislature ; they enjoy all the freedom and all the liberty of the Protestants ; but now their object is the power and the property, and this bill is framed, openly and admirably framed to give them both. The bill gives them, amongst many other situations, seats in parliament—a

Papist chancellor and Papist judges—Papist generals and Papist privy counsellors—and, amongst the rest, a Papist judge of the ecclesiastical court :—And must we not conclude, that when the Catholics gain that power, they will use every effort to grasp the extent of its exercise? Being possessed already of the elective franchise, the right of representation must give them a decided ascendancy in the Commons; in counties the number of Catholic electors will be able to turn the majority of votes in their favour; the power of their landlords will be defeated by the representation of priests, or if that fails, by the influence of the Catholic associations, which will spring up and be formed in every part of Ireland; tests will be published; their chapels will be turned into hustings, and their mass into a canvass; their numbers and their principles will soon overturn the power of the Protestant county gentlemen; the tenant will merge in the partisan and enthusiast, and the greater number of county representatives will be returned by the Catholic voters, who will naturally choose only such men as will forward the views and interest of their party. How will the Protestant gentleman then, (who now meanly turns to the views of the Catholic least he should lose his county influence) repent his folly, in allowing the Catholic claims, when he finds that, instead of strengthening, it must destroy their interest? The Catholic flushed at gaining, and the Protestant irritated at losing influence, instead of producing peace and harmony, elections will be carried on with the utmost rancour of party, and instead of uniting, will effectually disunite the sects, and for ever sever their interest. In cities the event will be as certain, but more dangerous; Papist mobs will be hired to determine and govern the elections: Open boroughs will be in a similar situation; and close boroughs, in the hands of Protestants, will then seem to be the only bulwark to preserve the relicks of Protestant power; but instead of preserving that power, they will only operate as a fresh source of Catholic ambition. We know how seats in these boroughs, nay, the very boroughs, are to be procured. Will the Catholics fail to proceed in the certain mode of possessing both; subscriptions will run through the country by the Catholics, to assist in procuring the full advantages of their power, and if they can out-number in the counties, bully in the towns, and bribe in the boroughs, the parliament will be their own—and how long will the *Constitution be ours?* An Hon. Bart. (Sir L. Parsons) has said, he is proud to acknowledge and retract his principles advanced in the year 1793, when he opposed the grant of elective franchise to the Catholics; but though a man may desert his principles, he cannot desert his arguments; and the arguments of the Hon. Baronet at that period, when speaking against the Catholics, are too strong and forcible to be passed over (Here Mr. B. read Sir L. Parsons' speech in the year 1793, wherein he used the most able arguments against the Catholic measures). When the Catholics gain the power of the parliament what will be their first objects? a parliamentary reform, that is a radical change of representation on the most levelling principles: whilst Catholics possess

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the population, and not the property, they will naturally adopt their projected system of reform upon that principle, and adopt that species of reform which will gain weight and influence to the population, and not to the property. Look to the plans of reform, published in fact by the Catholics themselves in the year 1793. The Society of United Irishmen, which has expired on the bed of public contempt and execration, had originally formed on the pretended principle of what they called Catholic Emancipation, and had latterly been composed mostly of Catholics themselves, entering into resolutions and publishing essays for their own body and their own purposes. Under that impression they published to the nation their plan of reform, grounded upon the basis of personal representation, annual parliaments and no qualification. [Here Mr. Barrington read the printed plan of parliamentary reform, published by the United Irishmen in 1793]. Has the case altered since 1793? Must it not be supposed that the same plan of reform adopted in that year continues the favourite system of the Catholic in 1795? And that the moment they get the power, will they not pursue that principle? Will it not be their obvious interest to oust the property of the country from parliament, and to introduce those who having none of their own will be the more readily induced to assist in reclaiming and reassuming the forfeited estates, and vesting the whole dominion of the country in their Catholic brethren? It is a folly to say that any obsolete ties or trite obligations could for a moment prevent the views of a party flushed with power and heated by success. The landed interest of Ireland then will no more represent it; the very lowest wretches in the country will mutually elect and represent each other; the most violent democrats of the country will compose the parliament; and when a parliament so composed gets the civil power, will it acquiesce in the present ecclesiastical establishment? certainly not. The same principle which led them to seek civil, would also lead them to establish ecclesiastical power on their own principle; they would then rationally argue that their laity being on the same footing as the Protestants, so should their clergy; and what power could then prevent them? The parliament their own, the people their own, and the property their own, they would either participate or abolish the Protestant Hierarchy. The Commons, the Lords, the church and the state, must yield to the power of the Catholics; and how long would they then support a Protestant King? It cannot be denied that the old and obsolete claims to the forfeited estates would naturally be fought by the descendants of the old proprietors; and the present bill is in the next instance peculiarly adapted to carry these claims into full and complete effect, by the appointment of Papist judges, a Papist chancellor, and a Papist ecclesiastical judge. The office of chancellor possesses great power and authority; the keeper of the King's seal, with a power to cancel the King's patents: the patron of many benefices and offices; the visitor of all Protestant seminaries and public institutions; 'tis he who appoints all the magistrates in the kingdom, and is guardian of all Protestant minors, and is termed the keeper

keeper of the King's conscience, united with the power of his equitable jurisdiction, and the extreme consequence annexed to his office ; yet this office, under a Protestant government, is to be committed to the hands of a Catholic. The chief justice of the King's bench has jurisdiction over all inferior courts in the kingdom, and can curb, punish or direct all the magistrates of Ireland ; he has power over all the Protestant corporations, and possesses the chief criminal jurisdiction ; high treason and offences against the state are peculiarly cognizable in this court, yet this also is to be placed in the hands of a Catholic.

The chief justice of the Common Pleas has a jurisdiction peculiarly adapted to the investigation and re-assumption, and of obsolete claims ; the writ of right is under his jurisdiction, and pleas of real property are in his court particularly cognizable ; and this office is also to be handed to a Catholic.

The Barons of the Exchequer audit all the accounts of the establishment, and their court now possesses in matters of property, great, legal and equitable jurisdiction : yet, these offices, and every other office in the state, are all by this bill adapted (it might be well said appropriated) to Catholics ; because, if Catholics were not intended to be placed in these offices, why include them in the bill, and give them specifically the power ? And if they are, can it be denied that all Protestant power must end in the country ?—Out of our great liberality we shall change places with the Catholic, save that the paucity of our numbers will for ever effectually prevent our re-assuming our power or our consequence in the nation : the Catholics know it, and they press it. By possessing the power of the parliament, the Catholics will also possess a total controul over the state. The supplies are the finews of the executive power, without which, its authority and prerogative are but names ; by stopping or suspending these supplies, the Catholics will have the power to do any thing they please in this country ; or may, by their system of short money-bills, when they think proper, put the crown in leading-strings ; by having the power of the supplies, they may new-model or disband the army at their discretion ; they may totally dissolve the civil establishment ; and if the crown refuses to appoint Catholic judges, or state officers, by having the power of the supplies, they may either compel him to do as they wish, or relinquish the government of Ireland, which in such hands as theirs, would rather weaken than strengthen the empire of Great Britain :—perhaps that may be their object.

Mr. Barrington animadverted severely on the language of Mr. O'Connor, and reprobated his principles and doctrine as the most dangerous and unconstitutional that any man had ever ventured to broach in parliament. The Hon. Member (Mr. O'Connor) had said, "that the army of the crown would be converted to a national army ;" such language only befitted the meridian of a French convention, from whom the gentleman seemed to have copied both his language and his principles, equally inconsistent with the happiness of the people, and the safety of the constitution ; he preached

preached a doctrine founded upon tenets the enemy of both, and in the glare of popular declamation, concealed the principle of unqualified democracy!—[Mr. O'Connor rose to explain.—Mr. Barrington replied.] He then adverted to the language of some gentlemen, and the inconsistency of an Hon. Baronet (Sir Hercules Langrishe) who, a favoured servant of the crown, had risen from the treasury bench, and spoke equally against the rights and interests of his benefactors, and against his own avowed principles expressed in his speeches in the year 1792 and 1793. Mr. Barrington said, that symptoms of constitutional apostacy and avowed inconsistence were too much for one night, and read an old prophecy of one St. Lazarianus, recited in Leland's history of Ireland, which he applied to the honourable Baronet.—Mr. Barrington then went into an argument to shew that the modern Catholic doctrine of an Irish cabinet, distinct entirely from that of Great Britain, was unconstitutional and utterly impracticable; and drew the conclusion, that none but those who intended a separation of the country could argue upon that principle. Ireland, he said, is certainly a free kingdom, annexed to the crown though not to the realm of Great Britain; the cabinet is a council annexed to, or rather an emanation from the crown of the empire; and as the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland is the deputy and not the partner of the crown, so two distinct cabinets, one in England, and one in Ireland, counteracting each other, must argue two distinct executive powers, which is utterly incompatible with the principle of constitutional connection between the two countries: the cabinet of Ireland must necessarily have a partial and local authority; but in matters which affect the empire generally, the cabinet of Great Britain, as immediately attaching to the crown of the empire, and deriving its existence from the crown, is competent to deliberate and advise on every measure affecting the constitution and general interests of the crown and empire; and as he conceived the acts of settlement and recognition, and the king's coronation oath, (which could not be partially dispensed with by an act of the Irish legislature) precluded the crown consistent with the stipulations under which the monarch received and held the sceptre of the empire, to dispense with that oath, so a question affecting the empire generally, and relinquishing the very vital principles of the revolution under which the crown grasped its sceptre, and the people their liberties and their religion, was properly an object of consideration in the British cabinet. To evince the disposition of the Catholics on that head, Mr. Barrington read the proceedings of the Catholic meeting of St. Catharine's parish in April last, where Doctor Sherlock, a Popish priest presided; these resolutions, amongst other things resolved, “*That the usurped interference of the British cabinet in the legislation of this kingdom, was a new insult upon the sovereignty of free and independent Ireland.*” Mr. Barrington then adverted to several similar publications, and contended that any sect, religious or political, avowing these principles, were not to be trusted with the guardianship of a country which they obviously wished to detach from its dearest and

and most natural connection. After many arguments on that head, Mr. Barrington proceeded to argue that the late conduct and suspicious principles of the Catholic leaders, rendered them unworthy of any concession from the legislature.—Three counties in Ireland were now said to be in a state of insurrection. Is it the protestants, who raised these insurrections; or were they papists, induced by the influence of Catholic associations and Catholic manifestos, to rise in defiance of the law, and attempt to coerce the parliament? Lord Fitzwilliam, in his celebrated letter, had said, “that nothing but arms could keep down the spirit of the Catholics.” That was a sad recommendation for favour to the legislature of the country.—Men with arms in their hands call upon the Parliament to concede to their claim, and whilst they acted in rebellion, their advocates had the presumption to declaim upon their loyalty. The parliament was called upon to give power to the most disaffected men in Ireland; a certain set of Catholics, in the middle rank, who duped the better and inflamed the lower ranks of the people—men who profess the Catholic, but practice no religion; who have some money, but no education; some talents, but no principle; much ambition and little judgment; they have ruined by their precipitation what they planned by intrigue, and uniting their principle and their practice, have evinced themselves equally unadapted to govern, and unwilling to be governed. This bill, fraudulently called by its supporters *emancipation*, in no shape or way served or affected the lower class of Catholics: it gave them no sort of benefit, or in any way whatsoever applies to them; it lessens not their rents or their tythes; it takes no burthen from them to place it on the rich; it is neither a relief to their wants or a spur to their industry; but the country was to be committed merely and solely to give power to a set of men who only wish to monopolize its offices and its revenue, namely, a few of the middle class of Catholics: and can these men be trusted? Mr. Tone, who had been implicated in the treasons of Jackson, had been also at the very moment of these treasons, secretary to the Catholic committee; so late as April last, he has been publicly thanked by them for his zeal and activity in their service; but could he be guilty as the secretary to the United Irishmen, and innocent as secretary to the Catholic association? They were the same persons under different titles. Treason has been proved on the one, and suspicion implicated the other. Lewins, who is also implicated with the treasons of Jackson, is also nephew to another of the Catholic Association, a leading character, a man who presumed to preside at the Kildare meeting when they resolved, “*That the removal of their beloved Viceroy would tend to the dismemberment of the empire.*” Subscriptions have been opened at the Garter tavern under pretext of promoting their emancipation, and in one sitting a thousand pounds had been subscribed to support this application; and similar subscriptions are now become general through the kingdom. But how are subscriptions to support their application? certainly in one of two ways, either by corruption, or ammunition. Mr. Barrington here called upon any hon. member in their confidence, to satisfy the house as to the purpose

pose of these subscriptions; to coerce, libel, or corrupt, was the only principle on which those subscriptions could be applied.—Mr. Barrington then said, that the arguments of hon. members, “that having granted the elective franchise, the grants of representation came of course, and could not now be denied,” was a weak and mischievous principle of reasoning, that because we have done wrong we must do worse, and because we gave liberty we must give power. If gentlemen argue that the grant of the elective franchise was dangerous and destructive in the first instance, the remedy is at hand: repeal that act, and by the repeal restore that safety to the constitution; but never let it be said, that, because we weakened we must also totally abandon the Protestant power in Ireland. The supporters of Mr. Knox’s motion in 1793, were not bound to support this bill; it goes vastly further than the motion, for this goes to every office in the state. Mr. Barrington went into many other arguments, to shew the danger of concessions, and declared his determination to risque every thing in support of British connexion. He said, that, convinced as he was that the Catholic enjoyed freedom and liberty in the fullest extent; that they sought not for emancipation, but power; that they wished not to reform, but to re-capture the country; he could not, consistent with his duty to his king, his country, or himself, become the instrument of their system; and was determined, upon every principle, and to the last moment of his life, to support the Protestant establishment, the just rights of the crown, and the union of the empire.—Mr. Barrington concluded by observing, that the language of his right hon. friend (Mr. Pelham) did him honour as an Irish member of parliament, and should convince this country that his character, his integrity, and his principles in a sister kingdom, did not merge in his official situation in this.

The Hon. C. H. HUTCHINSON. Mr. Speaker, an Honourable Member concluded his speech, by requesting the attention of the gentlemen of property to this, as a most momentous subject;—equally impressed with the greatness of it, I also call upon them, and upon the whole House, to give it the most serious consideration. Feeling the importance of the question, I cannot reconcile my mind to give it a silent vote, which I hope will be my apology for intruding upon you at so late at hour: I shall be very short; the sentiments I profess have been invariably held by my family, and so frequently expressed, as to render repetition almost unnecessary.

Gentlemen have said that they oppose this bill because it takes power from the protestant, to give it to the catholic: I support it from a thorough conviction that its object is not a transfer of power, but an encrease of strength and vigour to the constitution, by the union of our people.

Much has been said of the revolution;—I deny it to be a principle of the British constitution, as established at the revolution, that the majority of the people should be excluded from partaking of the blessings

blessings of that constitution which would never have existed but for them, and to which constitution we declare it to be our pride to assimilate ours.

You talk of the form of your government;—I tell you the form of no government has the prerogative to be immutable; but I tell you more, you confound the form of your government, as generated by your own abuses, with its original purity.

I assert it to be a first principle, that every Irishman ought to possess the capability of partaking of the blessing of the constitution; of the constitution which is strengthened in proportion as he supports it. Do I deceive myself? Is it rather a constitution intended not for *the people*, but for us chosen from amongst them? A constitution not for the many, but for the few? Not for a nation, but for a sect—the protestant sect—the protestant ascendancy. The ascendancy of the protestant, meaning by that his religion, every protestant must value, and no one more than myself; but if by ascendancy is meant the monopoly of constitutional privileges, perish ascendancy!—There is indeed an ascendancy, which is and ought to be dear to every Irishman, the ascendancy of the nation; this is an ascendancy which every good citizen ought to revere: national ascendancy is to associate man as honour to the individual, —invaluable; to be relinquished but with his life; but he who affects to raise his religion upon the degradation of his country is an enemy to both, a bad citizen, and an ostentatious hypocrite.

God forbid I should be considered an unprincipled leveller; I should be a sorry advocate for the cause I espouse, did I think of laying the foundation of the future prosperity of my country upon the ruins of religion.—No, Sir, I am as much attached to the protestant religion as any Member of this House; but I am thoroughly convinced that the interest of that religion does not require the martyrdom of any man. I wish for general, unqualified, constitutional capacity to my brother Irishman, because I feel he ought and does aspire to it—because I know he merits it—and because I am convinced that upon his obtaining it depends the future prosperity of my country.

Gentlemen on the opposite side of the House have stated, that this question does not concern Ireland alone; it is, Sir, a most momentous question, indeed: it is the cause of the catholics, it is the cause of the protestants, it is that of the presbyterians, of every inhabitant of your land, of the Irish nation, of the British empire.

Sir, the people of this country have been accustomed to see measures of great national utility carried through this House; you have done much for your country; she is, and ought to be grateful; but in the language of a Right Hon. Gentleman, they were “little the acts of relief,” compared to the present, which comprehends the whole people; we are not debating a question concerning the interests of any particular set of men, of any sect or party; we are in the act of this night peculiarly legislating for Ireland. Pass this bill into a law, and you have no man *constitutionally degraded*; do

this, and every Irishman will act hand in hand with his neighbour, and then, and not till then, shall this country, having laid the foundation of certain progressive improvement, be at peace at home, and assert her place among the nations of the earth.

You talk of the connexion between the two countries,—which connexion no man values more than myself; but you have given so much to others, that you caanot afford to be just yourself. You talk of standing by England: what have you to offer her in the hour of her calamity and disgrace?—The weakness of a party, not the strength of a nation.

Will you encourage the separation of your people with the presumptuous hope that you can *constitutionalize disunion*, and not destroy your empire?

I am for uniting the catholic and protestant, because the moment calls for coalition; because I am convinced the measure will strengthen our country, and protect every thing we value;—and I am for uniting him to us by an equal participation of the constitutional privileges, because I consider this as the strongest bond of union, and because I think he is justly entitled to it; and I am for restoring him now, because a great constitutional act, big with constitutional benefit, cannot be too soon ratified.

Sir, I consider this question upon the general and obvious ground of uniting our people, and shall not, exhausted as I am, and tired as I perceive the House to be, detain you with my reasons for agreeing to every particular privilege which this bill confers upon the catholics. I have thoroughly and long since convinced my mind, that every situation under the constitution which he can accept, we ought to grant, because I think him fully entitled, from his property, his talents, and his fidelity.

Mr. OSBORNE. Whatever may be the fate of the question to-night, it must have given great satisfaction to the friends of the measure to have heard the discussion that has taken place; from which, without much prophetic spirit, it may be foretold that however some mens minds are still under the influence of prejudice un-subdued, its final completion is not far distant. He then stated that as the object of the measure was conciliation, and the affectionate union of all, he should not hesitate to avow that he should feel less regret at the rejection of the measure for the present, than he should have felt at its success, if that success was to be considered as arising from a supposed necessity, and not a sense of right; from the calamitous situation of the country involved in war and not its justice; or was to be attributed to the zeal of one man, or one set of men, and not to the virtue of the parliament. And from observations that had fallen in the debate, he found it necessary to discriminate between the Roman catholic cause, as taken up by the body at large, and as pressed forward by a set of men in this town whose clamours were ever assailing our ears, and who, in affecting to speak the sentiments of the Roman catholic body, blasted by their own ~~its houses~~, and outraged the feelings of its best friends, by connecting it

it with the promotion of their own factious views. But, said he, as their sentiments are far different, and more congenial to the spirit of the constitution they seek to participate, he should, as others should also, rescue his mind from the impression first made by the few, who have thrusted themselves into the ostensible management of this great and popular cause, well knowing that in every such cause such men would arise, and would, in every instance, afford an equally strong argument against the wisest or most just measure.

I say, that I am a friend to the complete adoption of the Roman catholic into the bosom of the state, relying first on the great change in the political state of this country, since the system took effect; and that a policy, especially one of such a character, could not, on the first blush of it, be considered as expedient under circumstances so distinguishable.—That the house was armed to give free scope to the rights of the constitution in rescuing first the protestant from the hard bondage of resorting to the plea of necessity, against so great a proportion of his fellow-citizens, and the Roman catholic from the still harder of being subject to it, when the necessity ceased. At the period these laws took place, the spark of liberty that lived in Ireland was enjoyed only by the few protestant and English settlers here, when the misconduct of the Stuart family brought about the event which established the liberty of England, but was but a name here echoed from their shores. Before this the Roman catholics, an oppressed people, ignorant of what liberty was, or how to prize it, attached themselves to a Prince whose religious principles accorded with theirs, and religion was almost their only possession. They were subdued and met the fate of the conquered; and the liberty, then saved by their defeat, was cherished by the protestants, till it has at length blazed forth to bless one portion of the inhabitants of this country, and to inspire the veneration and illuminate the rest; and it is now in the power of this protestant parliament, by communicating this blessing to all, to make the Roman catholics bless the hour of their defeat, as much as the protestants ever hailed that of their triumph. But it is said by some gentlemen, that they entertain tenets adverse to the rights of the constitution, and dangerous to the liberty of a free state. In the first place most of those tenets are already abjured, and all of them are innoxious. If we consult the page of history we shall find that they never were dangerous, but as the Pope had temporal power to back them. As to supremacy, most dwelt on, before the reformation the King was head of the church in temporals, but it is idle to dwell on these. In the whole history of papal influence or intrusion into the concerns of foreign countries, it has ever been proportioned to his temporal power. Where is that now? Does even a shadow of it exist to give hope to the greatest religious bigot of the popish persuasion, or alarm to the greatest political bigot of ours?

But we should consider at what stage of the business we are now arrived. About twenty years back the principle of relaxation lost place, and without detailing its progress to the important concession

to 1793, it will be sufficient to observe, that every step of the liberal policy of the protestant was justified by the conduct of the Roman catholics, and its wisdom proved by the gradual extinction of the prejudices of both. From that period to 1793, they were in a course of probation, and from the wretched state in which they then were, they were introduced into the enjoyment of civil rights; but the security of these rights remained in the hands of others altogether, till the nation's voice hailed them into the constitution in 1793. A new principle then prevailed in the protestant mind, which the narrow policy of the day, instead of encouraging, checked; and by dividing the principle, they distracted the country. They gave a share of political rights, by giving the elective franchise;—they denied an effectual one, by refusing the representative;—they conceded the inferior offices of the state, and denied the superior, and this upon the ground of the enlightened mind of the Roman catholics, as if the light shone on the lower classes only, the higher still in darkness—a most preposterous policy. Besides, is not the country as much concerned in the upright conduct of its magistracy, in the due discharge of the functions of a juror of either denominations, as in the exercise of the duties of a teller of the Exchequer, a cashier, or a post-master? and yet qualification was left for the latter, when taken from the former; a policy thus as disgusting to the great body of the Roman catholics, as disgraceful to ourselves, making there a line of demarkation, when our own private interests are concerned to maintain an odious monopoly. It was said in the debate that the Roman catholics had not called for this till urged; and I remember in 1793, it was said that they had not desired the representative franchise; but it does not signify what they call for, or when, and they know little of the nature of man, if they think he will be satisfied with partial freedom, and less of the spirit of the constitution, if they then thought, or think now it will not foster its offspring to its maturity. It has been also said, that the Roman catholics are in effect free, that they enjoy equal laws—equal security in persons and property;—but what is liberty but the participation in that power which makes and preserves law. The first is liberty lent, the last liberty itself.

But we are now called upon to rectify the error of 93, before its worst effects are experienced; well worth gentlemen's attention to weigh the consequences of a general election, if it shall take place before this law passes. The Roman catholics have now the right of voting, and they have still a great separate object to attain. Can it be supposed they will not now unite for its attainment, and that there will not be a Roman catholic banner raised in every county for the professed Roman catholic friend, or most likely tested supporter? Will address, or worse than address, be wanting to inflame the minds of party against party? Will not the whole host of former prejudices and animosities be raised again, and the civil strength of Roman catholics and protestants appear marshalled through the country? and this is to be the closing scene of catholic conciliation,

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But the present state of the country has been alluded to.—We do, it is certain, experience outrage, tumult, and contempt of the laws, and from thence we are become the object to a watchful enemy of its fraternizing policy. I am not foolish enough to attribute all these outrages to one general scheme of disaffection, but am foolish enough to say, that if there did not exist an obviously just cause of dissatisfaction and discontent, that the attempts of the wicked would fail. It is this makes the deluded people the instruments of their factious traitorous machination. 'Tis from this that the eye of our enemy is ever directed to our shores, that our ears are daily assailed by reports of invasion; whether true or false, our alarms are perpetual, because we are conscious of the cause from whence they spring. And I remember once to have heard it said, by a person whose situation gave him the means of knowing that every war which France was engaged in with this country, its first measure was to excite the discontents here, well knowing the strange policy of the country, where all equally love freedom, and where there is a partial enjoyment of it.—In short, in whatever point of view, on whatever ground I take this subject, whether of justice, our surest guide, of approved policy, of constitution, of national security, or national character, I feel myself warm in the adoption of this measure to its fullest extent, and I do conjure every gentleman in this House to cast from him all partial monopolizing ideas of policy, look to his country's glory, suffer it to rise an ornament to civil society, a conspicuous example to the world of liberty acquired by reason, not by arms, and a glorious vindication of human nature, against the blasphemy of France, that calls upon rapine, murder, treason, and all the catastrophe of human wickedness as necessary instruments to assert liberty for man.

Sir JOHN PARNEL spoke against the bill.

Mr. BROWNE (College) said that he should have been glad, on a subject of such magnitude, to have been guided by the sentiments of his constituents; but having tried, upon a former occasion, to obtain them on a similar subject, he found so great a diversity of opinion, that he was forced at last, as he knew he should in this case be obliged, to rest on his own judgment. It might perhaps be supposed that that judgment might in some measure receive its complexion from the opinions of a much revered character in high situation, with whose intimacy he was known to be honoured; he therefore took that opportunity of declaring, that he never had heard, nor did he know the sentiments of that great person on the subject. From motives of delicacy he had never asked them, and perhaps from similar motives they had never been to him communicated.—He said upon this subject he did not expect to please either party, because he should, as he always had done, follow his own opinions, without sacrificing to the prejudices of either. He had always been guided in that house by two principles, the one a wish to preserve the people from the encroachment of government, the other

other to preserve the establishment and the constitution from the violence of the people. An attempt to reconcile these two great principles will always, to party men, make their owner appear inconsistent, but to himself he will appear uniform. With these principles, he had always thought that any application from any great and respectable body of people ought to be treated with respect, and therefore, upon all applications from the catholics, instead of talking as some did of scouting and affronting them, had voted for receiving and listening to them at least. On the same principles he had wished for every coalition with them, which every body must see would contribute so much to the strength of the country, which was consistent with the safety and welfare of the whole empire; but he had always thought that such coalition should advance by very slow and cautious steps, and so as never to endanger the church or the protestant interest, or instead of coalition set up one ascendancy in the room of another. He had therefore been used to think that we were proceeding too rapidly—that we were not wise for so rapid a conjunction: That notwithstanding all our flattering speeches to each other, there was still much heat, much ancient enmity, much ignorant bigotry to be overcome, before we were ready for a cordial union.—Government had sometimes appeared to think so too, and sometimes to the reverse, until by the strangest system of obstinacy and concession—of rejecting one day with haughtiness and granting the next day with humility—of weak, and fluctuating, and inconsistent councils for twenty years past, that had brought matters to such a state, that it little signified what any man thought, or had thought; he was to determine how to act as well as he could in the actual state of affairs.

In this view of things he had asked himself, not in order to determine on the present question, not what ought to have been done, but what is to be done now; and it really appeared to him that matters were come to that crisis, that it was just as impossible to prevent the catholics from coming into parliament, as to stop any of the natural laws of gravity. The weight which had been given them, by admitting them to the right of voting for members, must, by its natural impulse, force their way into parliament; he had voted against giving them votes at elections, but he knew not after that had been done, upon what principle of consistency Government could oppose their admission into the house. Some of their opponents in that house stood upon consistent ground; the objections to their intolerant religion, and their alleged disaffection; but the administrations of the country had deserted these grounds, and now talked of nothing but the constitution and the coronation oath. He would make but one observation, did not the constitution and coronation oath then stand equally in the way of giving them?

Thinking, therefore, as he did, that this measure could not now be prevented but by a union or a military government, and that after having put a weapon in a man's hand, it was not wise to provoke him; and thinking also that the opposition to it was not in most men to the measure itself, but to throw a censure on a great person

son who lately governed the country, and whom he loved and revered, he would vote for the committal of the bill; at the same time here was perhaps the only clause of it to which he assented. He saw many clauses in it, which went, in his opinion, though he was sure not intended, to overturn the establishment; and supposing it to go into a committee; unless those clauses were totally expunged, he would vote against the bill on a third reading. He was of opinion that the establishment should be fenced and guarded by all possible means; but to prevent a communication of political power seemed to him now impossible, and the attempt to lead only to eternal dissention.

Sir THOMAS OSBORNE. On the grounds of justice and general expediency the cause of the Catholics has been heretofore pleaded, with all that force of genius that, under the guidance of an inflexible love of truth, enables the right hon. Gentleman, who has introduced the bill, to exhaust the reasoning on every subject that he undertakes to elucidate. I therefore shall look at it in a new light and consider it as a step that leads directly to that parliamentary reform which, at the opening of the last session, was suggested, and contended for, with a degree of *unfeigned zeal* that stands a pledge for perseverance, and on the full accomplishment of which depend absolutely the prosperity and security of these kingdoms. I consider it in that light, because it requires the admissibility into this assembly of a great number of men who are now excluded, amongst whom, it is evident, that there are those who, in temper and prudence, greatly excel that whole host of philosophers who maintain the doctrines of ascendancy; and, I am persuaded, that our only way to guard against those dangers, to which we may be exposed, in consequence of that resentment that is excited in a race of men to whom, it does not appear Nature has denied the faculties of men, is to keep our eyes fixed on the strict principles of the constitution, and not to shut them against the light of reason.—And, Sir, I am sure, that it is neither unseasonable or irrelative for a man, on the present occasion, to deliver his sentiments on that subject, which appears to be the most important that can be conceived, when it is considered that the legislature and the government of an hostile and victorious country are composed of philosophers and patriots; at a time when we can see a door lying open by which adventurers and dependants may be admitted into our own, to exercise what has been, by the same illumined mind, indignantly termed the trade of parliament.

Sir, for the few moments that I mean to speak, I shall indulge myself in a vision, and imagine that I am addressing a committee of public welfare. And, although, as I have heard, with the deepest concern, a Member whose understanding fits him to have formed a better judgment, unhappily mistake one of the best productions of the pen for an advertisement for insurrection.—I too, perhaps may be thought guilty of speaking for it.—Still, I will say, that the errors of those misguided men, who mistake the republican

publican principle, and the designs of those vicious men who pervert and abuse it, are dangerous to the state and ought to be guarded against. But that is not a reason why the republican principle should not be investigated and understood, as the foundation of our constitution, and only foundation of any human government that is just; and that, Sir, is a sentiment that is not, by any torture, to be represented as coming from one who wishes to pull down the crown. And as a fast adherent to the crown, I maintain the republican principles, that pillar on which the crown rests. Sir, it is a celebrated speech of a famous statesman, that he would cling to the crown. I applaud the sentiment; but I think it had been better expressed had he said, that he would cling to the republican principle; for when that actuates men who are disposed to have an individual limited ruler, and to put a crown on his head, it, and it alone, has power to maintain that crown against all who would shake it. What has been the fate of the crown of France, that the world thought impregnable? Not having been grafted on a republican stock, it has perished. Sir, it is common with many of those who are justly the admirers of our constitution to say, that there is a certain principle in it that must, of itself, conduct men back to the right way when they have strayed to a certain distance. This is a most dangerous maxim, for it tends to make men supine, and certainly is no more than the doctrine of those who are but lazy philosophers. The truth is, that the wisdom of our ancestors could go no farther than to form a constitution on such a construction, that if, at any time, the monarchical and aristocratical branches should invade, to a certain degree, the democratical, it must resolve itself into a form of government purely republican. I, Sir, am averse to that change; and therefore I maintain the republican principle, that pillar on which the crown rests: seeing, that if we suffer it to be undermined by those vermin that are engendered in the filth of spurious aristocracy, the crown must tumble at last. Sir, it is monstrous to hear how gangs of men, who are knaves, wilfully confound the salutary rejection of a republican form of government with that of the republican principle; and it is equally lamentable to observe, how others, who are dunces, are totally incapable of drawing the distinction. It is nonsense to say that republican principle confounds the necessary and the natural distinctions amongst men: for though it does assert, that all men are equal, as to their rights, it is as strenuous in affirming, that in their qualifications to move in society, with benefit to society, they are not equal, and never have been so. As long as they continue to be what they are, and ever have been you must have the *profanum vulgus*, and in that *profanum vulgus* will ever be found men of all sizes, of mere wealth, the richest often the most contemptible. But the republican principle is not only the supporter but the arbiter of distinctions. Why is majesty in our constitution emphatically and truly stiled the fountain of honour? because it issues from that rock the republican principle. And when that advert's to the nobility, with which it not only is perfectly consistent, but of which it is the very author, it means the flower

of citizens. In our constitution nobility signifies the blossom on the tree of liberty, the crown is the fruit, and authority so produced is certainly wholesome; but it is not possible more strongly to prove the spurious and the noxious quality of those weeds, that have sprung out of the dunghill of parliamentary corruption, than by any interference in the smallest degree, with the democratical branch—I mean with the formation of it, not with the due controul of it in the proper place—had a strict adherence to original principle, exclusively confined the aristocracy to that dignity and high spirit of independence which the wisdom of past ages well knew were alone competent to the exercise of such a function.

These sentiments must impel any man who feels them to support every measure that tends to the re-establishment of the constitution; and, as I consider the cause of the catholics to be most evidently and deeply blended with that of reform, I shall conclude with once more repeating the zeal with which I am animated in prosecution of their interest, adding this single observation—that the peculiar circumstances of that kingdom call on us, with the loudest voice, not only to join the most zealous co-operation to the efforts of those men in England who are pursuing reform with sagacity and spirit, but is also to take a lead on that subject.—For what is the reason that that horde of our landed proprietors take up the pernicious and despicable abode that they do in England, followed by a train of mischiefs that are innumerable? It is because the vanity of empty men, not capable of discerning how real estimation is to be earned, is captivated by the sound of England's being called the seat of Empire; that is, it is where the king's court is held that is full of corruption. Let that corruption be abolished, and those slimy emigrants must return home, to avoid the contempt that ever must attend idle, insignificant, and wandering strangers, in any nation where men are brought back to the exercise of the judgment of men; and I rely on it, that the most effectual restraint on the absentees of Ireland would be a curb on the corruptions of the British court. I now, Sir, have endeavoured to do my duty, by speaking my sentiments with freedom, at a time when men of all nations are summoned to circulate, with zeal, the effusions of truth, and to feel a rivalship in doing so; and I say, that although as the subject of a limited monarch, I am not able to perceive any thing in the sound of the word republic that ought to make men wince, I still am as deeply impressed as any man with a sense of the truth of that doctrine that tells me, that we are to bow low to majesty, as that point to which the power of the people is drawn for the public good, by popular consent; and also to revere the genuine nobleman, whose virtues and capacity mark his resemblance to illustrious progenitors, and afford to his country the prospect of succession. For, Sir, though I am far from thinking that that is the wisest part of our constitution that fixes an hereditary right of legislation in any families, still, as long as we have peers of high blood, who shew that blood, it may be prudent not to decry it.

And,

And, before I sit down I must animadvert on a certain cant expression, that is a favourite with many, and by them applied in crimination to those who are able to estimate the value of liberty, applied sometimes in a pert, and sometimes a presumptuous tone; the phrase is, Gallicism of sentiment. Sir, for ought I know, the ruling sentiment in France may be that men ought to encounter all dangers and difficulties rather than submit to arbitrary rule. Sir, our constitution is formed on the purest principles of liberty, and if men who see that deviations have been made, and who fear that every departure is making way for the secret and gradual approaches of arbitrary rule, if they are zealous in pursuit of reform, they certainly are actuated by that sentiment that may be a gallic one; for though Gallia may have adopted it, that is not a reason why we should resign it. And as there may be men who may have taken the alarm at that intelligence that has been lately conveyed to us thro' the debates of the British parliament—intelligence that it was not possible to have collected in this kingdom, that Ireland is in a state of irritation: to them I must observe, that the people of Ireland are in that state in which it becomes men to be:—in the state of fairly discussing what is truth and justice, and consequently what leads to their own happiness and prosperity, and that, Sir, is not irritation. And if those members of the British parliament continue to abandon the busines of their own country, that they are sent to manage, in order that they may take up the concerns of another nation that they do not understand, and with which they have nothing to do, they will certainly justify that French sarcasm that has already pronounced some of them to be no more than mountebank orators.

Mr. FLETCHER. Sir, I rise I confess with some embarrassment, and a considerable degree of diffidence, to express my sentiments on the question now before the house.—I shall not pretend to say, that I am wholly unaccustomed to deliver my thoughts in public, but professional habits are but ill adapted for conveying the mind of the speaker on subjects like the present: and when I consider how new I am in this house, the present being the second time I ever had the honour of addressing you, I feel, I must own, some anxiety, least I should inadvertently let fall any expression, that could be construed to convey disrespect to the rules or orders of this house.—Sir, no man can revere them more than I, and it would be as presumptuous as it would be silly in an individual like me, purposely to intimate the slightest disrespect to the orders of this assembly.—If, therefore, amidst the warmth of debate, any expression shall escape me of such a tendency, I hope it will be attributed to its true causes, inadvertence and error. Sir, I feel my mind deeply impressed with the importance of the question now deliberating; a question perhaps of greater magnitude than any ever before discussed in this assembly; and, therefore, I should hold myself deficient in that duty which I owe to myself, to this house, and

to my country, if I omitted to declare in this public manner, those reasons which have induced me to vote for the bill now before you.

Sir, I think this bill founded in the eternal principles of abstract justice; I deem it to be suggested by the wisest policy; I hold it to be a measure, which when you investigate its probable effects, may now be adopted with safety to all; and lastly, were there no other motive to influence my conduct on the present occasion, conceding for the sake of argument, that I may be mistaken on all, or any of the grounds already enumerated, yet still, I feel the salutary regulations of this bill are loudly called for by the present state of Europe, and the existing situation of affairs in this country. I have said the principle of this bill is founded in justice—to attempt to demonstrate a proposition like this, would be to obscure it. It is a self-evident truth, that the inhabitants of the same country, governed by the same laws, should equally participate in the benefits of that constitution under which they live.—The code of proscription, under which the catholics groaned for a century, is almost without example in the annals of mankind. It seems to be conceded by the gentlemen on the other side of the house, that on the principles of justice, this code cannot be defended; they have sought to justify it only on the necessity of the times—These times have passed away—that necessity exists no longer—why then continue this code of proscription? For a century have the catholics, in silent anguish endured this code—their patient resignation has stood the test of arduous times—domestic calamity and public misfortune, three rebellions and five foreign wars, by affording opportunities of insurrection, only served, as gold is tried in the furnace, to prove their loyalty. Shall not an ordeal like this, be deemed a sufficient trial of fidelity? or shall it be supposed contrary to the dictates of reason, and the experience of mankind, that the catholics having demeaned themselves as loyal subjects, while under the pressure of the several laws, shall seek to assail the principles of the constitution, as soon as they shall be admitted to the full enjoyment of its benefits? But, perhaps, what justice would concede, policy ought to deny—I ask you what meaning do you wish to convey by that term policy? Do you understand by that term measures likely to promote the public good, or will you bestow it upon such as are sure to aggrandize the *few* at the expence of the *many*? Shall that measure be called good policy which will certainly unite the whole nation, or shall good policy be truly found in what tends to its disunion?

Do you really wish for the aggrandizement of your native land? or are there to be found amongst you, men who ficken and repine at its prosperity, who insure private emolument by public calamity? If you really wish for union amongst the natives of this too long distracted country, behold it in this bill—if you doubt the good policy of such a union, consider on one side its effects, and on the other, the consequences of civil discord. No sooner was the sword sheathed after the victories of William, than a war commenced more destructive and exterminating, than had been waged in the field—A war of penal statutes and civil proscriptions; by the silent operation of which,

which, the natives of Ireland, instead of a people, became a vile and degraded populace, and the constitutional independence of the country was destroyed. The revolution of William has been called by the gentlemen on the other side of the house, a glorious revolution—glorious it certainly was for England—for Ireland it was disastrous in the extreme, and was attended with the most pernicious effects—the annihilation of her woollen manufacture—the extinction of her commerce, the total loss of her legislative independence: against the usurped power of England, the illustrious Molyneaux, the friend of Locke and of mankind, a name dear to Ireland, raised his voice, but raised it in vain—The parliament of England ordered his book to be burned by the hands of the common hangman.—Penal statute followed penal statute in rapid succession, and in a few years the Irish parliament became so totally lost to a sense of national honour, that a resolution for granting the supplies to the crown for a period of twelve years, in the administration of Lord Carteret, was lost in this house only by a single voice. Why should I longer dwell upon what it is painful to remember—the utter debasement of national character which followed. The idea of a patriot was lost in the country; or if ever recollected, it was recollected merely as a sneer, and a term of reproach—as a name for a man who sought for individual emolument at the public expence. You could not have a patriot,—for you had not a country. The period which immediately succeeded the passing of the octennial bill, was an era of the greatest political debasement. The enactment of that law produced a revolution in Ireland, more salutary than that boasted revolution, of which we have heard so much this night. This law in some degree awaked the slumbering spirit of the Irish nation; religious rancour became softened and meliorated; the generations personally hostile to each other had passed away. These advances towards a partial union of the people, rapidly produced the most salutary effects—the catholics were permitted to testify their allegiance to his majesty's person and government—In 1771, the catholic mortgage bill passed this house—the common-law rights of purchase and descent, and the power of making wills were restored—what followed? a free trade—a bill of your own to regulate your army—the habeas corpus act—a bill to secure the independence of your judges—the repeal of the 6th of Geo. I. in England, followed by a declaratory act in the same country, recognizing the independence of the Irish parliament.—Such have been the effects of a partial union; therefore, the measure now under deliberation, is not only founded in the eternal principles of abstract justice, but it is also dictated by the soundest policy—if that can be called true policy, which advances the power and the wealth of a people: I have said this measure is just and politick, I now say it is also safe. During a century of oppression, the catholics were peaceful and loyal; shall they cease to be so, so soon as the galling weight of that oppression shall be totally removed? Shall an apprehension be entertained of their attempting to subvert the constitution, the very moment in which they shall

shall be admitted to the full enjoyment of its blessings? In my mind, such apprehensions are not warranted by history, which the wise historian of Greece has called, philosophy teaching by examples, by the experience of mankind, or by the dictates of common sense. If such are the designs of the Catholics, why approach, I ask you, this house in the stile of humble petition?—Why not await for a season the completion of those designs they are said to entertain, and if they have the power and the will too as it is said they have, vindicate their claims by force of arms?—Those gentlemen appear to me inconsistent in their mode of reasoning, who at one and the same time attribute to the catholics of the present day the religious bigotry and intolerance of their ancestors, and accuse them of a design of subverting the constitution in church and state, by the introduction of a popish democracy, tainted with the leaven of Gallic phrenzy.—Such a combination of politics and religion is a monster that never did and never can exist, except in the distempered imaginations of some gentlemen on the other side of the house. Sir, I trust no honourable member of this house, more truly respects the protestant establishment and the national religion than I do.—It is a system of religion wise and moderate in itself, and fit for a rational mind; but in this bill I can see no danger to the protestant establishment or the national religion. Sir, the catholics of the present day have but little resemblance to the papists of the last century, except in their attachment to a limited and hereditary monarchy; I say a limited monarchy, for I could easily demonstrate, were this the season, that the papists of the last century, particularly under the administration of lord Strafford, were the true friends of Irish liberty, and the zealous assertors of the rights of their native land against foreign domination.—I am perswaded those speculative tenets of the church of Rome, formidable I admit to every Sovereign, and hostile to the government of every country—I mean the supremacy and infallibility of the Pope, and the power of dispensing with the oaths of allegiance—exist no longer, except in the neglected volumes of schoolmen and theologians.—The Pope is scarcely now more than the Bishop of Rome.—When the Jesuits, that wise and dangerous order existed, who nearly monopolized the abilities and talents of the regular clergy of the church of Rome, who guided the consciences of all the catholic Sovereigns, and controuled the politics of every popish state in Europe; when these men acted in concert under the absolute government of their general, to support and advance the papal power, so long was that power truly dangerous and formidable. But that Society is now extinct, and with it has fallen the papal power; a power, the total destruction of which, notwithstanding what has fallen from the right hon. gentleman on the other side of the house (Mr. Pelham), and the apprehensions he seems to entertain from its rapid decline, I cannot regret.

But you have been told by a great law-officer of the crown (Solicitor General), that by law you cannot pass this bill. You have been told that the bill of rights prescribes certain oaths which

must

must be taken, and a certain declaration which must be subscribed by every member of the legislative assembly. You have been told that these oaths and this declaration form part of the solemn compact entered into at the time of the revolution between the crown and the representatives of the people, and that you are now bound by law to preserve this compact inviolable in all its parts. This doctrine has been confidently asserted by the right hon. and learned gentleman, and he has called upon any constitutional lawyer on this side of the house to rise in his place and contradict him if he can.

Sir, I am a lawyer by profession as well as the learned gentleman; and pretend to some little knowledge of the constitution; and I deny the doctrine to be constitutional or legal, as laid down by the learned member. Conceding for a moment for the sake of argument that a compact, if it were one, entered into between the crown and a convention on behalf of the English people at the time of the revolution, and which never was established by any act of the Irish legislature, 'till, after a lapse of four score years, it was recognized as law by Yelverton's act;—conceding thus much, yet I affirm that no act of parliament is so permanent and durable in its nature, as to be unalterable and incapable of repeal.—Constitutional experience and precedent refute this doctrine.—Before that compact parliament had more than once changed the religion of the state, and altered the succession to the crown; nay, even since that compact the house of Hanover has, by the power of parliament, been placed on the British throne.—This compact therefore, like all other compacts, must be subject to change.

Sir, these oaths and this declaration, not even forming a substantive part of the bill of rights, but subjoined to it, were calculated, and I will not hesitate to say wisely, for the meridian of England at that period, and not for Ireland; but supposing them to have been even wisely adapted to the state of Ireland, it was the state of Ireland as it then stood, and not the state of Ireland at the present day. And shall it be boldly asserted in this house, that you cannot now by law deliberate whether a great majority of the Irish nation shall be admitted to a full participation of the benefits of the constitution, because a parliament had decided a century ago, that this majority should not at that period enjoy those benefits?—But this doctrine is as repugnant to law and precedent, as it is to the common sense of mankind. Shall the compact at the revolution be said to have precluded all future operations of the human mind?—Was this compact so consummately wise, that Wisdom did then for ever close her books?—Have knowledge and literature been advanced, and the boundaries of science been enlarged in vain?—And is the parliament of Ireland immovably fixed at a point, while the rest of the world rapidly advances in the sciences of morals and legislation?—Arguments of this kind, if they had not been gravely and strenuously insisted on, could scarcely have called for or merited a serious examination.

A right hon. gentleman, (Mr. Pelham) has noticed the mischiefs that generally attend the abuse of words, and has excepted to the phrase, “*Catholic emancipation.*”—I do, for my own part, most heartily concur with the right hon. gentleman, in thinking that great misunderstanding has been produced amongst men by the abuse of words; and almost every science may complain of those abuses, upon which the philosophical delineator of the human mind has employed one entire book of his immortal work—But, Sir, the phrase, “*protestant ascendancy,*” to which the gentlemen on the other side of the house seem devoted, appears to me to be a phrase, at least as exceptionable as that of “*catholic emancipation.*” Protestant ascendancy is a cabalistical term, invented by the demon of discord, to conjure up a spirit of disunion amongst the people of Ireland. For my own part, Sir, I have not been able to attach to it any precise determinate meaning; nor am I aware of the peculiar idea, the gentlemen on the other side of the house would wish to convey by this celebrated phrase. If protestant ascendancy be understood to mean an habitual interference of the Irish hierarchy in the politicks of the state, I confess, I am not a friend to such habitual interference. Ecclesiastical domination appears to me to have been productive of calamities amongst mankind in every age, and in every country, from the period that the church sheltered itself under the Imperial robe of Constantine, crimsoned with the blood of his own family, down to the present times; and therefore I must own I am not a friend to ecclesiastical domination: That power hath received a check in every state in Europe; it becomes not us, therefore, to perpetuate it here. A connection between church and state, so far as to secure the permanent establishment of a national religion, is in my apprehension a connection salutary and wise, but a very close alliance between church and state, tends to sanction and establish the manifold abuses that have crept into both—abuses that every honest man, and sincere well-wisher to the prosperity of his native land, ought to wish to see corrected and removed. If by the protestant ascendancy, is intended a continuation of those blessings that are secured by a protestant government, I am its firm and attached friend, but if it be something hostile to every improvement that can be suggested in politics or morals, I care not how soon such ascendancy is destroyed: But can it be supposed, that the admission of the Catholics into a participation of the blessings secured to this country by a protestant constitution, will destroy that constitution? If so, how is this destruction to be effected? Whether by force or by fraud? Surely force cannot now be apprehended, for if the catholics were inclined to use it, they want not the repeal of those laws that exclude them from a seat in this house, to enable them to use their physical strength; and while the protestant ascendancy continues to be upheld by the lives and fortunes of those right hon. and hon. gentlemen, who have so boldly stood forward on this night, to pledge themselves in support of that ascendancy, it surely cannot be in danger.—But if the catholics have any share in

legislation, the constitution may be undermined by fraud. Sir, I should suppose protestant to be at least equal to catholic wisdom and prudence, and that this prudencé and this wisdom will be applied to the preservation of the constitution, and to counteract the machinations of catholic fraud; and I cannot suppose, that the protestants, after what I have heard this night, will swerve from those principles; for certainly the gentlemen on the other side of the house, are now incapable, and will at all times be incapable of being seduced from principles which they have on this occasion so warmly asserted—Gentlemen who profess themselves strongly attached to the principles of other men who have lived a century ago, will not, I am certain, be soon likely to forget their own.

Gentlemen, however, have urged the danger of innovation, and of innovation at this particular season; with respect to the general idea, the danger of innovation, that argument proves too much to urge it to the length of its principle, and it goes to approve every improvement in religion, politics, or morals. Magna Charta was an innovation—the reformation an innovation, the revolution was an innovation; and of course the protestant ascendancy was a very great innovation. Therefore, abstractedly considered, this argument drawn from the danger of innovation, ought to have no weight. But it has been said, innovation at this particular season is dangerous; and this argument, Sir, brings me to consider the necessity of adopting this measure, from the present crisis of affairs in this country, and the general state of Europe.

Sir, in my apprehension, when you conceded the elective franchise, you *necessarily* conceded the right of sitting in both houses of parliament.—With regard to a seat in the house of commons, it would be insane in my opinion to deny it.—You have gratified the great body of the catholics with the elective franchise, will you now exasperate the aristocratical part of that body, by refusing them a participation in the legislature, to which their opulence and station in life give them a natural and political claim?—How inconsistently you reason!—You say the catholics are friends to democracy, and of course hostile to the aristocratical interest in this country—and yet you grant the demands of the democratical part, and resist the claims of the aristocratical part of that body; that is, you have enabled the catholic people to effectuate the designs you have imputed to them, and you exasperate their leaders who might resist such designs; nay, you give the heads of the catholic body an interest and a common cause in promoting what some men call a radical and compleat reform in parliament, and thereby raising the democratical upon the ruins of the aristocratical part of the constitution. I say then, Sir, the imperious necessity of being consistent with yourselves, of giving weight to your own arguments, of preventing the mischiefs which you yourselves apprehend, calls upon you to adopt the present measure. Some honourable gentlemen who have recurred to the argument of expediency, and who do not so much resist the principle as the season of concession, are equally inconsistent:—What, you conceded the elective

elective franchise when a great body of the protestant people was inimical to such a concession, when your table was filled with petitions against the measure from every grand jury in every county in the kingdom; and you will not concede now the very little that remains to be conceded, when the whole body of the protestant communion appears to be warm, nay zealous, in the catholic cause. Does this look like wise policy, or a determined purpose of uniting every individual of this country, without these walls, in one common cause against you and the measures you pursue?—Where are the petitions against the measure now under deliberation? not one can be found—no artifice could procure one.——No, Sir, in a very short period indeed, there has been a miraculous coalition of all parties and all orders without these walls. How can you resist the wishes of a united people? and, if you could resist them, would it be prudent, would it be wise, to do so?—Can you stop the progress of the human mind, or prevent the thoughts and opinions of men from influencing their actions?—Can you prevent an united people from acting strongly, when it shall think deeply?—Contemplate the state of Europe, upon which, for reasons sufficiently obvious, I forbear to dwell; I wish not to irritate, but I wish, and anxiously wish, to soothe and appease, even upon this topic, the existing state of Europe. Some honourable gentlemen have reasoned with strange inconsistency; revolutions, say they, are rapidly advancing throughout Europe, therefore resist innovation at home;—but, I say, adopt the measure, while you have yet left the choice of adoption. If revolutions have advanced, and are rapidly advancing abroad, do you apply a remedy to this epidemic phrenzy, and do not, by your conduct, invite a revolution at home. But you would concede to humble petition what you would not concede to imperious demand: to that argument I answer, or rather to that topic of irritation, I deny the fact; for I say the claims of the catholics come before you in the stile of humble petition, and not of imperious demand.—Again I say, I do not approve of a mode of reasoning, drawn from the feelings of men in private life; I think one million should not address three millions of people, precisely in the stile one gentleman would address another:—In private life, a gentleman of high spirit and a delicate sense of honour, might say to another—Sir, I admit the justice of your claim, but as you have demanded it as a right, and not as a favour, you shall not have it. I own I do not feel the cogency of reasoning like this from one great body of the nation to another;—between such bodies the sense of public utility should supersede the sense of personal honour; therefore I cannot approve of the conduct of those honourable gentlemen who have alluded this night to the debates in Francis-street, and have borrowed topics of irritation from the catholic declamations there. Sir, I think it beneath the dignity of this house, to allude to those declamations; and such allusions, I must say, have not been made

this night to answer any good purpose, though I can easily conceive a purpose they might have been thought to have answered. If any thing prudent, any thing rational, any thing wise, has fallen from the speakers at that catholic meeting, gentlemen may, in their private speculations, condescend to adopt it, for prudence, reason and wisdom, will not do these honourable gentlemen much mischief, let them come from where they may; but if any thing inflammatory, seditious, irrational, or absurd, has fallen from that quarter, why have gentlemen made it their own, and repeated it this night within these walls.—To conclude, Sir, I do give my most earnest support to the present bill; I think it a measure which may be safely adopted, a measure founded in the wisest policy, dictated by the voice of justice, and demanded, imperiously demanded, by the necessity of the times. The question before you for your decision, is a question of mighty magnitude—it involves the dearest interests of yourselves and of your posterity—and may that all-wise Being from whom all good counsel proceeds, direct you for the best.

Mr. HOARE spoke in favour of the bill.

Mr. GRATTAN. What brings forward this bill? a Right Hon. Gentleman interrogates.—Justice.—'Tis the progeny of the public mind—'tis the birth mature of time;—does he solicit more causes? The Irish minister who in 1792 insulted the Catholics, and the British minister who in 1792 encouraged them, and his new friends who in 1794 patronized them, and both, who in the same year consented to the Catholic emancipation, though in 1795 they have deserted that engagement.—Does the Right Hon. Gentleman wish to hear more causes?—The defeats of these ministers who have made it necessary to combat by the privileges of the constitution the principles of an enemy who they cannot restrain by arms; and still more necessary in Ireland, because they had taken away her troops, her arms, and her artillery, and left her to fight the enemy by the native spirit and the unanimity of her people.—But we are asked, why bring on this question in war?—Because you want the service of the Catholic in time of war, and therefore in that time should give him the inducement; because if you mean to give up the Protestant ascendancy on the peace, you had better not expose him to the provocation of the refusal in the war. Because it is folly in the extreme to embrace unpopularity, when you want the people, in order to embrace the people when you stand less in need of popularity.—Besides, what security if this measure is postponed, that it will be conceded voluntarily?—Who will answer for the honour of public men?—Who will answer for their continuance?

A Right Hon. Gentleman has advanced an argument which goes to exclude the Catholics for ever. Their emancipation, says he, cannot be agreed to without danger to the constitution of both countries.—Dreadful Denunciation! Eternal Decree!—Without danger to the constitution of both countries, does the member say? on

On what ground?—He tells you, because if you establish their emancipation, you must repeal the oath and declaration against the Papal supremacy, the Virgin Mary, and the Real Presence.—It seems then we have been in a mistake all this time, and that the present danger is not republican principles, democratic sentiments, or French opinions, it is the Pope, the Virgin Mary, and the Real Presence; and to guard against such influences, observing and lamenting as he does, that the Pope has lost all power, he proposes to alienate the affection of 3,000,000 of your people, and one-fourth of the empire.—Thus he proposes to realize the danger which exists, in order to strengthen you against those dangers which are vanished. He seems to see danger in every thing which is safe, and safety in nothing but in that which is dangerous. The temerity of such caution, and the phrenzy of such precaution, shelter themselves under the name of the revolution.—It seems we are to state names against things, and sounds against principles.—The revolution was a great event, but has nothing to say to the present question.—It established great principles of liberty, which did not take place in Ireland for near one hundred years. It began by imposing on you the power of the British parliament, and those very oaths required in the first of William, were imposed by an English act of parliaments, and before they were arguments against the liberty of the Catholics, were badges of the slavery of the Protestants; but in the course of years, the Irish Protestant availed himself of the principles of the revolution, in a course of years it is reasonable the Irish Catholic should avail himself of the same principles.—That course is now completed; the leading part of the revolution is the claim of right which is founded on the *petition of right*, which was declaritory of the law of England, obtained by the Catholic ancestors of the English nation; and tho' religion interfered in the dispute, yet religion was not, and liberty was, the essence of the revolution.—And now, when the cause of religious interference, namely, the adverse claim to the crown, is at an end, you are unwarranted in opposing the principles of the revolution in their extent to all the Irish. But the gentleman argues the contrary, he quotes the revolution against its own principles, he urges the revolution as a bar to liberty.

The Right Hon. Gentleman adds, that the Catholic exclusion is necessary for the connection as well as the constitution; and he teaches us to think, that he speaks with the authority of the British cabinet.—What! will they say so? will they?—Will that ministry whose country has lost Holland, lost Brabant, lost a great part of Germany, lost the terror of the British name, will they reject the Catholics of Ireland?—Will they, after the loss of America, with an encrease of debt in the last thirty years of above 200,000,000; with a new Republican Empire rising upon them, dreadful from its principles, its power, its extent, and its victories—Will they talk in this manner?—Have they left themselves any room for internal proscription, or for internal persecution, or for theological tyranny under the mask of religion?—Or have they

they left themselves enough of territories, or space enough in the world, to proscribe three-fourths of this island and one-fourth of the empire?—To what allies and assistance have this ministry resorted, who, for the sake of the connection, would exclude the Irish Catholics? Are not their armies mostly Catholic? Is not your militia mostly Catholic? Is not a great portion of their seamen Catholic? Are not the princes with whom they are leagued Catholics? The king of Prussia is not so, nor the Dutch I acknowledge. What Catholic prince have they not sought? What Popish Potentate have not trusted? Have they not canvassed every Papist in Europe, and bought every pennyworth of blood, and every pound of flesh, and begged of princes to take their subsidies? And do they now cast off 3,000,000 of Irish?—They think it better it seems to buy Prussian faith with English money, than Irish soldiers with Irish privileges.—They think it better to neglect unanimity against France, and throw up new dikes and fortifications against the Pope and the Pretender.—They see, with dismay, two or three servants of the crown dismissed, the exclusion of 3,000,000 of men they regard not it seems; they alienate the subject to preserve the connection. At what does the English cabinet tremble? At the loss of Holland? No, they bore that well, very well. The loss of Brabant? No, they bore that well, very well. The anxious state of the West-Indies? No, that too they bore very well; but when a proposal is made to give Irish subjects constitutional privileges, then fears, such as they might have felt at the event of their own operations, begin to scare the ministry of Great Britain. So trembled the Carthaginian assembly. Those great men who had the honour to preside over the disgraces of their country, had borne the loss of their armies,—the loss of their elephants,—the loss of their power, with much philosophy, but when something that touched their own cabal, some tax on themselves was proposed, then they also trembled. The senate of Carthage trembled—like the British ministry, they were moved by nothing so much but the least of their misfortunes.

But when I suppose the British ministry really affected by fears, either for the constitution or the connection, on the present question, I pay too little deference to their understanding; they are alarmed about neither, and I will prove it. Three months ago they were willing to concede this very question; their present opposition to it must, it follows, have arisen from something that has happened since, which they do not chuse to discover, and not from their apprehension about the connection or the constitution. It seems it was safe for the connection and constitution in 1794 to admit the Catholics, but in 1795 fatal to both. No, a few months ago this house would have passed this bill, and the British cabinet would have consented:—Now if the constitution or the connection were objections, they were permanent objections, and existed when the cabinet and the parliament were friends to the bill; and therefore whatever may be the present motives of both, the connection and constitution enter not into the consideration of either. The Right Hon. Gentleman

Gentleman having alluded to authority in England, accounts for the difficulty in Ireland; he ascertains the seat of the disease, and the place of the impediment; and it appears, that the bar to the freedom of the Catholics of Ireland is the cabinet of Great Britain. I rejoice that the people of Ireland stand acquitted. The Protestants of Ireland are willing; vast numbers of them have petitioned.—The great cities are willing; the great mercantile interest are willing:—The cabinet of England is the bar to the freedom of the Catholics; and the dispute is no longer a question between Protestant and Catholic, but between the British minister and the Irish nation. And on this ground I do not content myself with dissenting from them, and from those who say that Catholic emancipation would be fatal to connection; I say precisely the contrary; I say Catholic emancipation is necessary to connection.—I will add also, it has become necessary to empire, her ministers have made it so, as the bounds of the empire contract, the privileges of her constitution *must* be extended.

But I find that Catholic emancipation is held incompatible with our monarchy.—What! his majesty, the head of a Catholic league—the king of Corsica—the lord of Canada—the great ally of the Emperor—the grand confederate of the king of Spain—the protector of the Pope.—The king of England, whose armies are Catholic, whose European connections are Catholic—are his Irish subjects the only Catholics in whom he wont confide? Has he found religion make the Emperor false, or the Prussian faithful.—Such were not the sentiments of the speeches from the throne in 1793 and 1795, when his majesty calls on all his subjects to defend their religion and their constitution. What religion? a religion of disabilities.—What constitution? a constitution of exclusion. Am I to understand that his majesty called forth his Catholic subjects to fight for a constitution which was to be shut against them, and for a religion which was dangerous to the king, and penal to the Catholic.—No, it was not the Pope, nor yet the Pretender,—it was Paine, it was the French Republic, against which you called for the zeal of your people, and held out the blessings of the constitution. But now it seems it is the Antichrist against whom you place your batteries, the Virgin, and the Real Presence; and in that strain of grave and solemn raving, a Right Hon. Gentleman proposes to take up arms against the grave of Popery, which is shut, and to precipitate into the gulph of Republicanism, which is open;—perfectly safe for the king, he and those who join him think it, to affront the Catholic subjects by gross suspicions;—others have proceeded to the grossest invectives; perfectly safe they think it, to banish them from all places at court and seats in parliament; to tell Catholic virtue, Catholic talents, Catholic ambition, you must not serve the king, you may have property influence, but you must not act in constituted assemblies, nor in any rank or distinction for the crown.—Perfectly safe they think it to establish an incompatibility between popery and allegiance.—Perfectly safe they think it to insulate the throne, and reduce the king of Ireland,

like

like the Pope, to Protestant guards instead of a people, and then, it is proposed, that those Protestant guards should monopolize all the powers of government, and privileges of the constitution, as a reward for their disinterestedness. In support of such a policy, it has been advanced in a very idle publication, that the Roman Catholics, as long as they have the feeling of men, must resist the natural propensities of the human heart, if they do endeavour to subvert a Protestant king; but I pass that over with the scorn it deserves. It has been also said, that his majesty's oath is a bar.—Oaths are serious things.—To make them political pretences is a high crime—to make an obligation, taken for the assurance of liberty, a covenant against it—to impose on conscience a breach of duty—to make the piety of the king the scourge of his people—to make the oath of the king the curse of his people, is an attempt atrocious in the extreme.—Examine the argument, and you find the oath was taken three years before the exclusion of the Irish Catholic;—the oath is the first of William, the tests that exclude them the third; so that his majesty must have sworn in the strain and spirit of prophecy.—Examine a little further, and you will find his majesty swears, not in his legislative but in his executive capacity,—he swears to the laws he is to execute, not against the laws which parliament may think proper to make. In that supposition he would, by his oath, controul not himself but parliament, and swear not to execute laws but to prevent them.—Examine a little further, and you will find the words of the oath cannot support the interpretation:—"I will support the true profession of the gospel, and the Protestant religion as by law established." This is the oath—I will perpetuate civil incapacities on Catholics—this is the comment. Such comment supposes the true profession of the gospel to stand on pains and penalties, and the Protestant religion on civil proscription. Examine the oath a little further; and, if the comment is true, the oath has been broken—broken by his majesty's gracious recommendation in favour of the Catholics in 1793—broken by the grant of the elective franchise—broken by the Canada bill—broken by the Corsican constitution. Hear the speech of the viceroy of Corsica;—His excellency having recommended to parliament the civil and military establishment, proceeds at last to the church, and advises them to settle that establishment with his holiness the Pope. Very proper all this no doubt; but if the interpretation is true, what an outrageous breach all this of his majesty's coronation oath. I should ask, whether in the interpretation of the oath, his majesty has consulted his Irish bishop and yet he could have found among them men perfectly competent. I will venture to say, that the head of our clergy understands the Catholic question better than those consulted; I will add, he does not, I believe, disapprove of their emancipation, nor approve of the arguments against them. But it seems, in matters that relate to the Irish church, the Irish clergy are not to be consulted, and an English episcopacy, like an English cabinet, is to dominate the destiny of Ireland.—I have great respect for the learned prelates of England,

England, particularly for one, whose exemplary virtue and apostolic character, qualify him to preside over whatever is learned, pure, or holy; but in Irish affairs, in matters in which our civil as well as our religious interests are implicated, might I say, his majesty's counsellors should be his Irish parliament and his Irish bishops. It seems highly prejudicial to the church and the monarchy, that the argument which excludes the Catholic under pretence to strengthen both, should be attended with circumstances that bespeak the Irish hierarchy a cypher—the English hierarchy a nuisance, and represents the king a magistrate as sworn against the privileges of his people. So far am I from agreeing to such an argument, that I must here repeat what I advanced before, and say, that I do not dissent, but I contradict. I don't say that Catholic emancipation is compatible with the present monarchical government in Ireland, but that it is now become necessary to it; and that as for the preservation of the connection, you must make it compatible with the privileges of three-fourths of your people—so, for the preservation of your monarchy, you make monarchy also compatible with those privileges, you must make the regal capacity of the king compatible with the civil capacity of the subject.

In the same strain of narrow argument, have gentlemen introduced the church, as endangered by the emancipation of the Catholics.—They propose to attaint 3,000,000 of their fellow-subjects for its safety.—They propose to make it the ostensible cause for incapacitating three-fourths of the island; they make the people its enemy, and then they think they have provided for its safety.—They think the religious difference not sufficient; they add temporal caufes; so that the losf of their privileges is to be added to the preference of their religion; to secure to the established church, Catholic hostility, they add the new and powerful motives of interest, ambition and pride, to the languid motive of religion, and in the complication of hostile passions find a security for the church. This alarm explains itself, and is acknowledged to be an apprehension for the fate of tythe.—Thus the true profession of the gospel, and the Protestant religion, take somewhat a grosser complexion, and the divine strain of argument is explained into something very temporal and very mercenary.—Here is a new odium, and therefore a new danger annexed to tythe.—Three-fourths of your people pay the church without compensation, and therefore it is proposed they should pay it without privilege. The payment they render is made an argument against the liberties they seek. They pay the clergy the profits of their church, and the clergy are desired to deprive them of the blessings of the constitution, lest they use the power to defeat the payment; that is, the clergy are advised to return evil for good, and to justify pains and penalties by presupposing delinquency. But I speak not of the immorality, I rely on the impolicy of such an argument so long as tythe is only a temporal payment without spiritual consolation.—The Catholic like the Presbyterian may submit; but when once the tythe of the clergy is made inseparable from the civil incapacities of the people, when

to preserve your tythe you disqualify your fellow subjects, tythe is on the brink of ruin.—When the institution of tythe is made incompatible with the constitution of the land, tythe is on the brink of ruin, 'tis not in your piety to save it.—When once it is to encounter, not only the love of gain, but every other motive in the human breast, then tythe is in danger.—Thus the advocates for this objection expose the church, its establishment, and its income in the front of the battle, as they did before expose the connection and the monarchy, and represent under an affectation of zeal, the establishment of the Protestant church, like the connection and the monarchy, inconsistent with the liberties of the people.

From the church their error proceeds to the senate, and it is urged, that parliament will be destroyed by the admission of the Catholics;—that parliament will at last be destroyed, like man and the works of man, I do suppose.—That institution, says some famous author, will perish;—it will yield to time that conquers every thing, to corruption that moulders every thing. I wish to delay its dissolution, and therefore I would add to its strength by communicating its privileges. I would enlarge its circulation; I would invite property, talents, and ambition to act here, so that the sphere of the constitution should be the region of their activity. You have no objection to poverty, to dependency, to purchase, or even to bankruptcy.—Why not admit a portion of your country's strength as well as its weakness.—The strength you gain is the embrace; you must strike your root to the center, if you mean to lift your forehead to the skies. Open the doors of your house, and shut the gates of controversy, and throw on the image of Discord that chain which she has thrown on your people. It seems, however, in some opinions, this is not the method to preserve parliament, better to sell the peerage and exclude the Catholic, and so reduce the senate to a synod of the orthodox, the champion of the minister, rather than the representatives of the people. To preserve the institution of parliament it is proposed to democratize, by exclusion, Catholic property, to democratize Catholic aristocracy, and thus mass them all in one host of exconstitutionalists, and on that mass to pour the chalice of invective and vituperation.

You complain of their meetings, you are the cause;—you send them out of doors, and when you find them in the street you are angry.—You are the founders of their Francis-street meetings, you are the author of their convention, you are the authors of the vehement language therein; 'twas the echo of your passion, and the reverberation of your own declamations. The Roman Catholic, far from being dangerous, has borne his testimony in favour of the institution of the Irish parliament, for he has resolved to relinquish his emancipation, rather than purchase his capacities by an union. He has said, let the Catholic be free, but if his freedom is to be bought by the extinction of the Irish parliament, we wave the privilege, and pray for the parliament.

I beg

I beg to recur to the four heads of objection, the connection, the monarchy, the church, and the parliament; and I beg leave to lay it down as absolutely and as broadly as language will permit—that these four objects are not endangered by Catholic emancipation, but, on the contrary, that they cannot be saved without it. That it is absolutely necessary in these times for the connection, for the monarch, for the church, and for the parliament, that their existences shall be rendered compatible with the privileges of the people.—The empire and the constitution are like the world, large enough for all their inhabitants, and all their establishments.—The policy that excludes, is your ruin.—The bill that harmonises, your safety.—Before such a consideration, the difficulties of Honourable Gentlemen, the Real Presence, the Virgin Mary, and the Pope, vanish.—Before such a consideration, the real difficulties, the quarrel of one minister with another minister, to displace whom the former destines 3,000,000 of men to everlasting incapacities, do not vanish, but appear in the highest degree culpable and fatal.

It has been said, that this question was forced forward by the last administration.—I affirm, that it was not in the power of that administration to have kept it back. The mode in which it should be brought forward was a subject in which the Catholics would have been directed by those who supported them; but the bringing it forward was, in their minds, an unalterable determination.—I affirm it, their communication was touching the mode only, their determination was to bring forward the bill; which is an answer to that stuff which is written or said, that Earl Fitzwilliam brought forward the Catholic question.—No, we found the question, and we supported it, because it ought to have been supported.—It is said the Catholics have had communication with a person, as their secretary, against whom in a late trial some intercourse with Jackson has appeared; but he was not their secretary when he had that communication; and I understand, on that trial it did appear as follows:—That this gentleman, among other reasons for declining to go to France, said, he would thereby lose the money promised by the Catholics, by which it appears, from this testimony, that their mind was not disposed to a French communication, but abhorrent to it.—Thus the circumstance, if relevant at all to the question, is an evidence in their favour.

Gentlemen have mentioned the conduct of the Catholics to the government.—May I be permitted to mention the conduct of the government to them, and I beg leave to call that conduct the history of proscription.

In 1792, the religious war began; can we forget the attempt of government to divide the Catholic democracy from its aristocracy, and the people from their leaders, and the flock from the clergy;—their attempt to use the influence of the latter to defeat the claim of the former, and to pervert religion into an instrument against liberty?—Can we forget the paper war of that time carried on by government, where the scribes of the court, whose fortune was their falsehood, levelled their artillery against the people; and by paragraphs

graphs, and libels, and impudence, outraged the wounded feelings of the Catholic subject, and fed as they were by his taxes, turned assassins of his character?—Do we forget the scornful rejection of the Catholic petition, and the sad and miserable grand jury war?—Don't we recollect the instructions sent from the castle to their friends in the counties, to pledge Protestant against Catholic, on the question of the elective franchise, and to make a conflict of passion, and a separation of interest, by a perpetual circle drawn about the franchise, within which it was to be enchanted for ever?—Do we not remember a minister presiding most improperly at one of those meetings, to inflame, mislead, and canker the mind of the Protestant?—Do we forget the order in favour of the Catholics from the throne,—the instant crouching to that order,—and then the return of the malice of the Irish court, and the bitterness of its prosecutions; the hive swarming forth again of hireling scribblers, against the characters, and the prosecutions against the lives, of the Catholics, for having petitioned for their liberty?—Do we forget these things? Where are the ears of your perjured witnesses, and the minister's little manifesto, hawked about the streets of London and Dublin, as little to be relied on as those witnesses?—Have we not heard of the closet conversation, and the attempt to poison the mind of the king; the tampering with the corporation, and the endeavouring to exclude, by influence, those whom the government took credit for having rendered admissible by law.

And now behold the growth of the cause under this course of persecution:—They began with a division among themselves, and conclude with unanimity among themselves and a division among you: if that can be called a division, where the Protestants of a number of the counties, of all the great cities, and all the mercantile interest, have come to petition in their favour, and where nothing prevents the success of the Catholic but the influence of the government.—The youth of the kingdom too, they who, in a few years must determine this question, they have decided for the emancipation, with a liberality which is natural to youth, and a sagacity which is peculiar to years—and they will sit soon in these seats, blended with Catholics, while we, blended with Catholics, shall repose in the dust.—Another age shall laugh at all this,

“ Her Justice bury what your pride has plan'd,
“ And laughing freedom reassume the land.”

In this general application for the Catholics there has been no application against them, nor city, nor county, nor grand jury, nor corporation has appeared against them, that of Dublin alone excepted.—Thus the Catholic emancipation ceases to be a question between the Irish Protestant and Catholic, and is now a question between the ministers of another country and the people of Ireland. They advance—the Catholic description of them—they advance from the wilderness, where, for an hundred years they have wandered, and they come laden with their families and their goods, whether

whether conducted by an invisible hand, or by a cloudy pillar, or a guardian fire, and they desire to be received into your hospitable constitution. Will the elders of the land come forth to greet them? Or will the British ministry send out their hornet to sting them back again into the desert? I mentioned that their claim was sustained by a power above—look up—behold the balances of heaven—Pride in the scale against Justice—and Pride flies up and kicks the beam.

Col. STEWART said this was a bill of power, not of rights, and was not a ground for any parliament to entertain. If the bill should pass, the King would be obliged to come forward, and demand a repeal of the coronation oath: for unless armed with power in both branches of the legislature, he could not support the Protestant establishment, as by the working of the constitution the royal negative was now laid aside. He could not discover why the parliament of Ireland were more liberal than that of Great Britain. Certainly it was not that the Catholics there were not more respectable—No, it was because the parliament in England knew that by touching this question they would break the compact between the King and the people.—He doubted not whether it was not rather Protestant ambition than Protestant liberality which brought forward this business. Indeed the Protestant sentiment could not appear for two months, during which time the viceroy was receiving addresses, and answering every address by a pamphlet in favour of this measure. But the Protestant had spoken, and what effect did it produce? It appeared to him that the Catholics were never to be reconciled. Catholic favour was set up at auction, and however nigh one party might bid, the other went a step higher. Speaking on the subject of the detected correspondence of certain persons with France, he said he saw a union of Irishmen growing that would ruin the land; they were twisting it to a band of strength that would strangle the constitution;—it was a French fraternity, and if the men of property did not awake, their property, their peace, and their constitution was gone.

Sir F. HUTCHINSON said a few words in support of the bill.

Dr. DUIGENAN—stated the Catholic petitions. They all prayed, “That all penal and restrictive laws now affecting the Catholics of Ireland might be repealed, in consideration of their loyalty to their sovereign, their respect to the legislature, and dutiful and obedient submission to the laws.”

The petition from Cavan, signed by a Romish priest, who in his signature styles himself, “R. C. Bishop of Kilmore.”

The petition from Roscommon signed by a Romish priest, in his signature styling himself “Roman Catholic Bishop of Elphin.”

The petition from Galway signed by four Romish priests, in their signatures styling themselves respectively “Titular Archbishop of Tuam,

Tuam, Bishop of Elphin, Bishop of Kilnacduagh, and Bishop of Clonfert."

The petition from Drogheda by a Romish priest, in his signature stiling himself, by initial letters only, " Roman Catholic Archbishop of Armagh, Primate of all Ireland."

The petition from Newry by a Romish priest, stiling himself, " R. C. Bishop of the diocese of Dromore."

The petition from Limerick by a Romish priest, stiling himself, " R. C. Bishop of Limerick."

The petition from Longford by a Romish priest, stiling himself, " R. C. Bishop of Ardagh."

The petition from Tipperary by a Romish priest, stiling himself in his signature, " Right Rev. Dr. Mc. Mahon, Bishop of Killaloe."

Dr. Troy, titular archbishop of Dublin, in a pamphlet intitled, " Pastoral Instructions addressed to the Roman Catholics of the arch diocese of Dublin, published in 1793, page 85, states, that the Roman Catholic bishops of Ireland act as ordinaries in their several dioceses, and are appointed by, and act under the Pope's bulls.

The Romish priests above mentioned, signing themselves Roman Catholic bishops, and all the laity who signed these petitions with them, have, by such signatures, openly avowed their contempt of, and disobedience to the laws and the legislature, even at the very time they appear as petitioners to the house for a repeal of these laws, and contradict in the most audacious manner, the very substance of their petitions. They did not act so from ignorance of the laws, for they signed petitions to parliament in 1793, in the same manner; but their friends advised them to withdraw such petitions, and present new petitions signed in a different manner, with which advice they then complied. And these Romish bishops, particularly of Elphin, openly exercise ecclesiastical jurisdiction, dissolving marriages by sentences, and executing judicial instruments under episcopal seals, and signing such instruments as bishops.

The laws thus violated are the following:—Act of 16th of Richard II. called the Statute of provisoës, punishment, præmunire. Act of the 2d Elizabeth, ch. 1. sect. 12. punishment for the first offence, forfeiture of goods, and a year's imprisonment: punishment of a second offence, præmunire; of a third offence, that of high treason.

Act of the 9th William III. chap. 1. sect. 1. punishment perpetual exile; returning to the kingdom, punished as traitors.

Act of the 21st and 22d of George III. chap. 16. sect. 6. punishment the same with those recited.

The other consideration in their petition, on the score of which, they pray a repeal of all penal and restrictive laws, affecting the Roman Catholics of Ireland, is their loyalty to their sovereign. This is to be examined.

Omitting former instances of the disloyalty of Roman Catholics, I come to their present proceedings.—The Roman Catholics
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of the city of Dublin, met the 23d of December last, appointed a committee of nine persons, who drew up the petition of the catholics of the city of Dublin, now before the house, which was approved by the whole assembly: they at the same time agreed to request all the Roman Catholics of the nation to prepare similar petitions, and present them to the house. This request was immediately complied with by the Roman Catholics in every county, city, and borough throughout the kingdom.

Some of the catholic nobility and gentry of ancient families throughout the kingdom, (the whole of which body are so few in number, that such of them as have any considerable property do not amount to forty throughout the nation) had disapproved of many proceedings of the Roman Catholics of Dublin heretofore, and had withdrawn from their assemblies, and Earl Fitzwilliam states in a letter written by him to Lord Carlisle, and published as a pamphlet, that he, entertaining some doubts whether the petitioning Roman Catholics of Dublin, and their committee of nine, spoke the sense of the Roman Catholics of the kingdom at large, sent for some of the chiefs of the catholic nobility and gentry, whom he styles *Seceders*, and asked them, whether they agreed in sentiment with the Roman Catholic Assembly of Dublin and their committee of nine? and that they assured him, they were in perfect union with the assembly of Dublin and their committee of nine, and that such assembly and committee were duly authorised to speak the sense of all the Roman Catholics of the kingdom; and that they were willing that Mr. Edward Byrne, the chairman of that assembly and committee, should take the lead in all business respecting the Roman Catholics of Ireland. Hence it is plain, that the Roman Catholic Assembly of Dublin, and its committee of nine, do declare the sense and opinions of all the catholics of Ireland. This assembly met at a Romish chapel in Francis-street in the city of Dublin, on the 9th of April last, and at this assembly several most traiterous and seditious speeches were publicly pronounced; four of them, by four members of the committee of nine; and a fifth, by a nephew of one of the committee who happened to be then sick; in which they most traiterously endeavoured to incite and encourage all Irish soldiers and sailors in his Majesty's armies and fleets to desert their colours: openly declared, that the war we are engaged in against the French was, on our part, and the part of our allies, an *impious coalition* against liberty: expressed their joy at all disasters that befel our armies and fleets, and the highest exultation that the armies of the confederated despots (as they styled his Majesty and his allies,) were flying before the soldiers of liberty: asserted, that all victories obtained by his Majesty's armies and the fleets were public calamities to Ireland, and that Irishmen ought to weep for them; that Ireland was ruined by her connection with Great Britain; that they would hereafter never make any application to a British ministry, nor have any connection with them; that they would support a *radical Reform* in the House of Commons; and, that this nation could never

never be happy, 'till its government was changed into a republic, independant of Great-Britain! At the same time, magnifying their own power and riches in the most vaunting and reducing manner to the multitude; these speeches they published in all the Popish newspapers, that is, in the newspapers published in Dublin. the patronage of all which they have purchased, two excepted, The assembly then entered into certain resolutions; which they have also published, in one of which they *respectfully thank Theobald Wolfe Tone, Esq; their agent, for his important services to the Catholic body, which no gratitude can over-rate, and no remuneration can over-pay.* In another, they resolve, that the Right Hon. Henry Grattan be requested to introduce the catholic bill immediately into Parliament:—and, in another, they resolve to raise money by a speedy and liberal subscription throughout the kingdom, under pretence of defraying the expences of their present application to Parliament, but in reality to support internal insurrections and rebellion.—[Here the Doctor read several extracts from the speeches and resolutions at Francis-street chapel on the 9th of April last.] —He then stated to the house who Mr. Tone is, on whom the catholic assembly bestow such lavish praises: Stated the tryal and conviction of the Rev. Mr. Jackson, a French spy and agent, for high treason. On this tryal it appeared, that *Tone* was to be appointed an agent by certain conspirators and traitors in this kingdom, (one of which is nephew to one of the committee of nine) to go to the French Convention, and to solicit an invasion of this kingdom by the French; that he had drawn up a state of Ireland to be laid before the French Convention, and that he attended at several meetings of the conspirators, at one of which he read the aforesaid paper to the conspirators. This paper stated, that the people of Ireland were divided into three classes.—1st, *Protestants* of the established church, the fewest in number, but who had almost the whole landed property in the nation, and were in possession of the whole patronage of the country ecclesiastical and civil; that these were all aristocrats, adverse to any revolution, and attached to England. 2d class, *Dissenters*, all republicans and enthusiastic admirers of the French Revolution. 3d, *Catholics*, the bulk of the people, almost the whole peasantry of the country, in the lowest degree of misery and ignorance, ready for any change, because no change can make them worse: that the name of England and her power was universally odious to this third class, they are enemies to England from their hatred to the English name: they are in a semi-barbarous state, of all others the best adapted for making war. That there is no doubt but an invasion with a sufficient force would be supported by the Catholics, *from their hatred of the English name*, resulting from the tyranny of near seven centuries. This paper further strongly enforces an invasion of Ireland, rather than of Great Britain by the French. The tryal and conviction of Jackson was on the 23d of April last, it appeared that *Tone* was one of the conspirators, and drew up this paper in April 1794, a year before the tryal; and it appears from

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the resolutions of the Roman Catholic Assembly on the 9th of April last, about a fortnight before the tryal, that *Tone* who is by profession a barrister, is and has been for some years past the confidential agent of the Catholics of Ireland, and must be supposed well to know the sentiments of that body in political matters; he is also the author of a pamphlet, called the Northern Whig, published about three years ago, proposing and recommending a coalition between the protestant dissenters and the catholics, for the purpose of pulling down the present establishment in church and state, and forming a republican government in this kingdom, separated from, and independent of Great Britain. All these circumstances connected with the publication of the traitorous and seditious proceedings of the Roman Catholic assembly at Francis-street chapel on the 9th of April last, the avowed organ and representative of the whole catholics of Ireland, plainly shew, that the general body of the Roman Catholics of Ireland, have no pretensions to loyalty, and that their petition in that respect, is an acknowledged falsehood. So much for their pretended loyalty, respect for the legislature, and dutiful and obedient submission to the laws of the Irish Roman Catholics. Some Roman Catholics of ancient families, and who have preserved parts of their estates amidst the former bloody convulsions of this country, are well known to be of different political sentiments from the bulk of the Irish Roman Catholics as above stated; to be men of honour, and as faithful subjects of his majesty, as the tenets of their religion will suffer them to be to a protestant prince; but as before stated, the number of that class is inconsiderable, any bill framed for the political aggrandizement of a body of people entertaining such detestable and traitorous political sentiments as already stated, ought to be rejected with the utmost contempt by this house.

Proper to inquire, whether Roman Catholics, from the avowed principles of their religion, are entitled to be put on an equality with Protestants, in a Protestant state, in respect to political power, the avowed principle and purpose of the present bill?—Roman Catholics absolutely deny the supremacy of the King and state in all ecclesiastical concerns, and obstinately refuse to take the oath substituted for the oath of supremacy (prescribed to be taken by the Irish act of the second of Elizabeth) by the English act of the third and fourth of William and Mary; “ That no foreign prince, prelate, state, or potentate, hath, or ought to have, any jurisdiction, power, superiority, pre-eminence or authority, ecclesiastical or spiritual, within this realm.”—At the time this act of William and Mary passed in England, it was the received law of Ireland, that Ireland was bound by the acts passed in the British parliament, when Ireland was particularly named in them; and this oath was accordingly taken in Ireland by virtue of that English statute, by all persons who were thereby enjoined to take it, and particularly by all the members of the Irish parliament, which met in Ireland in the fourth year of William and

Mary, as appears by the Journals of the House of Commons, When Great Britain, in the year 1782, relinquished her ancient right of binding Ireland by British statutes, this oath was prescribed to be taken in Ireland by the same persons who were obliged to take it before that time under the British act, by the Irish act of the 21st and 22d of his present Majesty, usually called Yelverton's act.—It has been often asserted, both in this house and out of it, that the Irish constitution owes its very birth and origin to the famous year 1782 : yet, if this bill passes, that oath, in respect to Roman Catholics is to be abolished, and that boasted constitution of 1782 is to receive a mortal wound.—Roman Catholics not only refuse to take the aforesaid oath, but roundly assert that the Pope, a foreign prince and prelate, is entitled to exercise supreme ecclesiastical jurisdiction within this realm ; that he is guardian and sole expounder of the canons, and all ecclesiastical laws ; that he, *proprio jure*, may make or dispense with all laws of this kingdom relating to ecclesiastical matters ; that *appeals* from all ecclesiastical courts in this kingdom lie to his supreme tribunal ; that he is Christ's vicar on earth : the supreme visible head of the church on earth. Roman Catholics profess themselves ready to swear, that the Pope has not any *temporal* jurisdiction within this realm, either directly or indirectly : but such oath cannot be kept by any Roman Catholic who holds the above doctrine of the supremacy of the Pope in的精神s, because a great degree of temporal power and jurisdiction in a State, is annexed and inseparably united to the supreme jurisdiction in spirituals, and interwoven with it ; for instance, the validity of marriage is a matter of pure spiritual cognizance, and must be pronounced on by ecclesiastical courts, from which all Roman Catholics believe that an appeal lies to the Pope ; on the validity of marriage depend the temporal rights of inheritance, of dower, of alimony, of separation, of divorce, of liability to a wife's debts, of administration of intestate's effects ; nay, even the very right of succession to the crown may depend on it. Excommunication is a spiritual censure, yet it involves many temporal rights ; and a thousand other instances of indissoluble connection of temporal power and jurisdiction to the supreme ecclesiastical authority and jurisdiction, might be given ; a subject therefore, who denies to the state the supremacy in ecclesiastical matters, denies nearly one half of the legislative and executive authority of the state.

The Doctor referred to the authority of Sir John Davis, in his speech on the oath of supremacy, delivered in the council chamber in Ireland in the reign of King James the First ; that great lawyer states, “ That as all the causes that rise within this kingdom, be either ecclesiastical or civil, the King must have power and jurisdiction to decide and determine, as well the one as the other, or else he shall be but half a King within his own kingdom, as having jurisdiction but in half the causes so as his people must be fain to appeal to some foreign power, to beg judgment and right in those causes.” — What is the notorious effect of such doctrine ?

trine? The subjecting of this kingdom, in respect to one-half of its legislative and executive power, to a foreign prince; which is a crime, according to Locke, if committed by the Sovereign or legislative power, to be punished by deposition. Locke's words are, "The delivery of the people into the subjection of a foreign power, either by the prince or the legislature, is certainly a change of the legislative, and so a dissolution of the government; for the end why people entered into society, being to be preserved one, entire, free, independent society, to be governed by its own laws; this is lost whenever they are given up into the power of another."—Roman Catholics holding such doctrine cannot be made, with any degree of prudence, legislators, chancellors, and judges, as this bill purpofes to make them. The Irish Roman Catholics are more attached to this foreign jurisdiction than the English Roman Catholics. In the reign of Henry II. (for the constitutions of Clarendon,) the subject of contention between Henry and Becket, forbud the exercise of the papal jurisdiction in England, yet they were enacted by the Parliament of England, then all catholics. This wise prince would not have contested this point with so much zeal, if the power claimed by the Pope in spirituals, did not trench on his temporal power.—It has been attempted to turn the argument of the danger of the Pope's supremacy in spirituals into ridicule, by a right hon. baronet, a first-rate wit in this house, by his asking, does any man in his fenses now dread the power of the Pope, a poor petty sovereign, who owes his safety to the protection of a regiment of English dragoons? To this it may be answered with great truth, that it is perfectly immaterial in what person—whether a prince or a beggar—the Roman Catholics suppose the supremacy to be lodged, as they assert that it is not lodged in the state: because the danger to be apprehended from so pernicious a tenet, arises from the numbers and power of the persons in the nation who hold it, and not from the power of the persons they suppose to be invested with it. As the danger to the state, when there was a pretender to the crown, arose, not from the power of the pretender, a poor banished prince, without territory or revenue, but from the number and power of his adherents in this country.—The right hon. Baronet pilfered this joke from the famous Romish agent in England, who has published his own jesuitical letter to the Baronet, in which this piece of wit will be found by any person who will give himself the trouble of reading it.—No sect of people, denying the supremacy of the state in one-half of its legislative and executive authority, can with any propriety be put on a level of political power, with those who admit in the fullest manner the supremacy of the state, as well in ecclesiastical matters as in temporal.—A second avowed principle of Roman Catholics, which prevents a full communication of political power in the state with them, and will be an eternal cause of separation between them and Protestants, is that uncharitable tenet of exclusive salvation. The Romish church holds christians who differ from the church of Rome in religious

igious opinions, cannot obtain salvation in the next world.—This uncharitable opinion tends strongly to render Roman Catholics irreconcileable enemies to Protestants; how can real amity subsist between them, when the Roman Catholic believes his protestant neighbour to be a living tabernacle for the devil, and that his spirit, immediately on its separation from the body, descends to hell, and is doomed to eternal misery? Some Roman Catholics revolt from this dreadful doctrine, because their natural good sense and benevolence overcome their religious prejudices; but the bulk of them hold the tenet, and it is carefully inculcated by their clergy. "Tis a cruel and unchristian doctrine, and calculated for eternal discord and separation. Dr. Troy endeavours to justify it, by asserting that the protestant church also holds the tenet of exclusive salvation; his reasoning, and arguments on this point are sophistical; from his own arguments and quotations it is plain, that the protestant church, as the truth is, allows that all christians, of whatever sect or persuasion, may be saved; but the Romish church excludes all christians, those of their own communion excepted, from salvation.—Dr. Troy takes great pains to prove that Roman Catholics do not, and ought not to abjure the infallibility of the Pope; the oath they take in that respect is, "That it is not an article of the catholic faith, neither am I thereby required to believe or profess, that the Pope is infallible." He observes, that all they swear is, that the Pope's infallibility is not an article of faith, but that they are left at liberty to believe it if they think fit; and he praises the English Roman Catholics for rejecting the form of an oath, a few years ago, which precisely stated, that they did not believe the Pope to be infallible; and then he states, that the decrees of the Pope, *Ex Cathedrâ*, are completely decisive and infallible, when acquiesced in by the majority of bishops; that is, that they are now completely decisive and infallible, because the acquiescence or dissent of the majority of bishops cannot now be even collected, as it is next to impossible that any general council will ever be again assembled in christendom, in which alone the acquiescence or dissent of the majority of bishops could be collected. Here then is the infallibility of the Pope avowed to be a principle of the Roman Catholics, notwithstanding the shuffling oath they take in that respect. This is a dangerous doctrine, and ought to exclude the maintainers of it from an equality of political power with protestants in a protestant state. What influence can the obligation of an oath have with persons who believe this infallibility? for if the Pope shall pronounce and decree, *Ex Cathedrâ*, or officially as Pope, that the oath is unlawful in itself, and does not bind, the swearer believing in his infallibility, must also believe that he is loosed from the obligation of his oath, and that he does not stand in need of any dispensation whatsoever for that purpose. See a notable instance of this method of freeing Roman Catholics from the obligation of oaths, in the Bishop of Cloyne's present state of the church of Ireland, page 21, where he states the letter of Cardinal

nal Ghilini, the Pope's nuncio at Brussels, the cardinal protector of Ireland, so late as the year 1768. It is stated by the favourers of this bill, that the protestants as well as the Roman Catholics of Ireland, are anxious that it should pass into a law; that the city of Dublin has petitioned the crown in favour of it, and that several assemblies in different counties in the kingdom, composed of protestants and Roman Catholics, have also petitioned the king and this house in favour of it. Nothing can be more unfounded than the assertion, that the protestants of Ireland of the church established, are favourers of this bill. The protestant corporation of the city of Dublin petitioned the king against the principle of it, and prayed his protection for the protestant establishment in Ireland. A few sectaries in the city of Dublin, improperly enough styled protestants, met and agreed on petitions to the crown in favour of the bill: at one of those meetings, at which thirteen attended, they styled themselves the merchants of the city of Dublin, Mr. Abraham Wilkinson, an anabaptist, presided, and was supported by Mr. Joshua Pim, a quaker, and Mr. James Hartley, a dissenter; these three gentlemen are certainly men of respectable characters in the mercantile line, and have made fortunes with unblemished reputations: but it must not be conceded, that they and the few persons of their own republican faction that assembled with them, spoke the sense of the protestant merchants of the city of Dublin. Another assembly, called an aggregate meeting, was convened in Dublin; these aggregate meetings are a late invention of the republican faction in this kingdom: a few bell-wethers of that flock meet together, and if one of their faction happens to be a sheriff or a magistrate, as is sometimes the case, they draw up what they style a requisition to him, to assemble forthwith the whole gang by public advertisement. As this faction is in general composed of the meanest, the poorest, and most desperate of the community, all levellers, no person ventures into an assembly thus convened, who has any regard for his purse or his throat. When such an assembly meets, one of the captains of the gang pulls a string of seditious resolutions or a factious petition out of his pocket, reads them to his confederates; they are instantly adopted, signed by the captain, and published with great industry throughout the kingdom, by the factious newspapers. Mr. Alderman Howison, a dissenter, lately called an aggregate meeting in this city; a petition was there produced, read, and adopted by the assembly, purporting to be a petition to his majesty in favour of the Roman Catholic claims, and the assembly then came to a resolution of deputing Mr. Alderman Howison and another gentleman, a dissenter, as their ambassadors, to present this petition to his majesty; the assembly consisted of ninety persons, and the petition was afterwards sent about the town to all republicans to sign it, by which means they procured about 500 signatures to it, and the ambassadors carried it to London, and presented it to his majesty at levee. To give some idea of the republican principles of this assembly, and the rank of its component parts, the principal orator at it was a man of the name of Willis,

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by trade a maker of leather breeches: this man, at a sheriff's entertainment about a year ago, given by Mr. Sheriff Giffard, refused to drink the king's health, at which the company was so enraged, that they filled a large glass with the drainings of the bottles, compelled the breeches-maker to drink it off to the king's health on his knees, and then turned him out of the room.* Mr. Howison a few years ago, was by the intrigues of a republican faction, at that time headed by Mr. James Napper Tandy, elected Lord Mayor of the city of Dublin, in prejudice to a most respectable alderman, Mr. James, whose turn it then was to fill that office, and which he has since filled greatly to the honour of the city and his own credit. (Alderman James, is brother-in-law to alderman Howison.) One Cooney, the editor of a factious newspaper styled the Morning Post, (who is now suffering imprisonment in Newgate, being convicted of publishing several false, malicious, and seditious libels), was, previous to the mayoralty of alderman Howison, convicted of publishing a most scurrilous and malicious libel against our queen, the pattern of all that is good and great, the best of wives, the best of mothers, and the ornament of her court and kingdom; for this offence Cooney was sentenced to be imprisoned and pillored, at the expiration of the term of his imprisonment; he suffered the punishment, and lord mayor Howison, having an official dinner at the Mansion-house, in a day or two after Cooney was liberated from his imprisonment and the pillory, invited Cooney to this dinner, and he was placed at this entertainment next the first nobility of the kingdom, though he had publicly stood in the pillory a few days before in College-green. It cannot be admitted that this bear-garden of republican dissenters, spoke the sense of the protestants of Dublin. In the county of Cork fourteen persons assembled, six only of them freeholders of that county, and entered into resolutions favourable to the catholic claims, and to this bill, and styling themselves the freeholders of the county of Cork, sent up their resolutions to Lord Kingsborough, one of the representatives of the county in parliament, as instructions to him how to vote on the bill. His answer to these persons is remarkable for its spirit and propriety; he has spoken against the bill, and has declared that he will vote against it, notwithstanding these pretended instructions of freeholders. The same political legerdemain has been played by the republican faction in several other counties.

The numbers and power of the Roman Catholics of this kingdom, have been exaggerated by the patrons of this bill, not only beyond reality, but probability; and such exaggerated accounts have been carried over to the English ministry, and have had considerable effect. As to numbers, the Roman Catholics of Ireland do not exceed

* The Editor of this Report, whilst he faithfully details the Hon. Member's speech, deems it just to say, that several of the personal allusions in the course of it, have been publicly contradicted in the most solemn manner.

ceed the Protestants in a greater proportion, than that of two and a half to one; such was the proportion by a very accurate account of the number of the inhabitants of this kingdom, made in the year 1732; the whole inhabitants of this kingdom then amounted to something less than two millions. The number of inhabitants has certainly since increased, but it is highly improbable that they amount now to four millions, that is, that the population of this country has been more than double in sixty years. The accuracy of the modern calculators of population is much to be suspected; Mr. Chalmers, in a late tract, has proved to demonstration, that the calculations of Doctor Price, as to population in England, are grossly erroneous; the surface of Great Britain is to that of Ireland, in the proportion of three and a half to one; if then Ireland contains four millions of inhabitants, as modern calculators assert, Great Britain, which to a traveller appears to be much better peopled, must contain upwards of fourteen millions, which is much more than the inhabitants of Britain are usually calculated at. But supposing Ireland now to contain four millions of inhabitants, it is certain that the proportion above mentioned of catholics to protestants in 1732, must be rather diminished from many causes in this year, (1795) in favour of protestants; and that as the strength of the dissenting interest in Ireland, is confined to four counties only, in which four counties the protestants of the established church are at least as numerous as the dissenters, it follows, that the great body of the protestants of Ireland, are protestants of the established church: it is also equally certain, that much the greater number of the protestant dissenters of Ireland are good and faithful subjects of his majesty, and well attached to the constitution; and that the republicans amongst them are not so numerous as generally imagined, but that their turbulence makes them appear to be more numerous than they are in reality. As to the power of the Roman Catholics in the state, that must be estimated not so much from their numbers, as from their landed estates and personal property. The landed estates in the hands of protestants in Ireland, are to those in the hands of Roman Catholics, in the proportion of fifty to one; and, the catholic agent, Mr. Tone, may be believed, when he states that the peasantry are mostly catholics, and the poorest and most wretched in Europe: what personal property there is lodged in the hands of Roman Catholics, is confined to merchants and traders of that profession in cities and towns; and they certainly are not possessed of the twentieth part of the personal property of the nation. To convince gentlemen of this truth, let it be remembered, that a few years ago, a national bank was established in this kingdom, a sum of 600,000l. was the capital: the Roman Catholics of Ireland, (though very ambitious of becoming directors of this bank,) were only able to subscribe sixty thousand pounds of the capital among them all; the rest was subscribed by protestants! Away then with these fallacious boastings of the wealth and power of Irish Roman Catholics! 'Tis one of the arts practised by the patrons of this bill in this house, to endeavour to intimidate protestants by prophecies,

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and forebodings of dreadful wars, tumults and massacres, which they are constantly trumpeting forth, as the certain consequences of the rejection of this bill. When I see a gentleman, equal as an actor to Garrick, Barry or Sheridan, get up in this house, with all the well-dissembled marks of horror and dismay in his countenance, his hair standing at end, and hear him conjuring up the hideous sprites of battle, murder, and sudden death, as consequences of rejection, in solemn tones from the lowest key of his voice, as if he was enclosed in a hogshead and speaking through the bung-hole—though I admire his ability in acting, yet, as I am no way dismayed by the unsubstantial goblins, my great respect for this house alone restrains me, from singing to him the nurse's song.

“ Get away Raw-head and Bloody-bones !
“ Here is a child does not fear you.”

It has been argued, that the Parliament of this kingdom has already conferred on Roman Catholics the elective franchise; that acquisition of the representative franchise, is the certain consequence of the possession of the elective; and that therefore it is absurd to reject the bill, and refuse now the representative franchise to the Roman Catholics, which they will certainly soon acquire. How does it appear, that the acquisition of the representative franchise is the certain consequence of the acquisition of the elective?—Experience proves the contrary. No man can possess the representative franchise in England, who has not a clear unincumbered estate of 300l. per annum, which entitles him to sit in Parliament as member for a borough; or 600l. per annum, which entitles him to sit in Parliament for a county; yet, the great majority of those persons in England, who enjoy the elective franchise, are excluded from the representative franchise, because they have not estates of 300l. per annum, nor of 600l. per annum. The enjoyment of the representative franchise by Roman Catholics in Ireland, would subvert the constitution; and if it were true, that the enjoyment of the representative franchise is a certain consequence of the enjoyment of the elective, the argument of the patrons of this bill would only prove, that we ought instantly to deprive the Roman Catholics of the elective franchise, for the preservation of the constitution in church and state. This bill if passed into a law would not content the Roman Catholics, for they pray the repeal of all restrictive and penal laws, affecting them particularly; which this bill if passed into a law would not effect; though it is fully competent to the subversion of the constitution. The Roman Catholics have been called upon by the republican faction to make their present demands: that restless faction saw they were too weak to carry on their design of establishing in this kingdom a democratic republic on the French scheme, without the assistance of the bulk of the people; they have therefore called into their aid the Roman Catholics, by offering to them the subversion of the constitution in church and state, founded in the 2d year of Queen

Queen Elizabeth, revived and strengthened by new barriers at the Restoration, improved, and renovated, and again established at the Revolution, again strengthened and fortified in the year 1782, the glorious æra, as the patrons of the bill say, of the enfranchisement of Ireland. The Roman Catholics have attentively listened to the call, and zealously embraced the offer; that they are now completely republicans and democrats, see all their late publications; the Stewart race, to which they were attached as monarchs, are extinct, and they mortally hate an English government, and the house of Brunswick. If you capacitate Roman Catholics to enjoy all the great offices of the state, and to sit in Parliament by passing this bill, what is called by the republican faction a reform in Parliament, must be the immediate consequence, because as the representation of all counties, potwalloping boroughs, cities, and towns, where the election is popular, will be open to catholic ambition, catholics will become natural enemies to all close boroughs from which they will be in general excluded; they will therefore more strongly unite themselves with the republican party, and insist on the destruction of these boroughs, and the division of the kingdom into departments like France: if you confess, by passing the present bill, that you cannot and dare not resist their present demands, how will you be able to resist their demand of a reform, when their strength and influence will be increased ten-fold, and when their interest will draw still closer the bands of confederacy between them and the republicans? All aristocratic influence will be then banished from this House, it will become a mere democratic assembly, and the more catholic the more democratic. Then adieu to all establishment; church and state will vanish before them, an immediate attempt to turn this monarchical government into a republic under the protection of France, and severed from the British empire, will be the consequence. This nation will become a field of battle for the British and the French, as Sicily formerly for the Romans and the Carthaginians; misery and desolation will overwhelm the country like a deluge, and sweep away Protestant and Roman Catholic in one common ruin: Britain, as heretofore, must, from the geographical situation of the country, prove victorious, and experience will teach her the necessity of uniting this country for ever to the British empire, which she, fatally for her own and our happiness, neglected to do at the revolution, when she had it in her power. If this bill should pass this House and the Peers, it is impossible that the King could give the royal assent to it. Part of the King's coronation oath, settled at the revolution, is as follows: " I will to the utmost of my power, maintain the Protestant religion as by law established, and preserve to the bishops and clergy, and to the churches committed to their care, all such rights and privileges, as by law do, or shall, appertain to them or any of them." This oath has considerable additions made to it by the act of Union between England and Scotland in the reign of Queen Anne. That act enacts as follows, " that all acts then in force for the establishment and preservation of the church

" church of England, and the doctrine, worship, discipline and government thereof, shall be in force for ever. That every King or Queen, at his or her coronation, shall take and subscribe an oath to maintain and preserve inviolably the said settlement of the church of England, and the doctrine, discipline, and government thereof, as by law established, within the kingdoms of England and Ireland, the dominion of Wales, and the town of Berwick, and the territories thereunto belonging. That this act shall for ever be a fundamental and essential part of the treaty of union between England and Scotland." I have already shewn, that the bill, if passed into a law, would not only subvert the civil constitution, but that it would also subvert the ecclesiastical establishment; and that therefore his Majesty, a most religious pious prince, could not consistent with the obligation of his coronation oath, give his royal assent to such a bill. It has been argued, that the royal veto is now extinguished by disuse, and that the King is, by the constitution of the kingdom, obliged to give his royal assent to any act which has been approved of by the houses of Lords and Commons; and that if the houses of Lords and Commons should agree upon an act for abolishing the Protestant religion, or even christianity itself, the King would be obliged to give the royal assent to the act, and that his doing so, would be no breach of his oath. This argument is pilfered also from the letter of the Romish agent in England to a right hon. baronet already mentioned, but he uses it in a more disguised and Jesuitical manner than it is stated in this House. Little credit is due to the arguments of this Romish agent: during the American war, he constantly preached up in Parliament the most violent republican doctrines; when it pleased God to afflict his Majesty with a most grievous malady, to the great grief of all his faithful subjects, this man was impious enough to declare in the English House of Commons, that God Almighty had *burled* his Majesty from his throne; as it was asserted in the English and Irish papers of that day. Upon the destruction of christianity in France he changed his opinions, and wrote violently against the French democrats, for doing the same things which he had so often, and with such energy, commanded, when performed by the American Republicans. The reason is plain—the Americans then stood in need of the assistance of the French, who at that time professed the Roman Catholic religion; the Americans therefore favoured the Roman Catholic religion, but the French, in their late revolution, proscribed all christianity; consequently the Roman Catholic religion, which this agent flings pulling down the *Majesty of Religion*. Hence *illæ lacrymae* of that gentleman, and hence his recantation of republicanism. This argument to prove that his Majesty may at any time violate his coronation oath, both in premises and conclusion, may be fairly denied; either or both houses of Parliament cannot dispense with the obligation of his Majesty's oath; it was never before asserted that they would assume the pretended power of the Pope of Rome, of absolving from the obligation of oaths, neither

ther can it be conceded that his Majesty's veto is gone by disuse. A case may be however put further, to show the absurdity of the argument: By Irish acts of Parliament unrepealed, the kingdom of Ireland is declared to be for ever annexed to and dependant upon the Imperial crown of England, and that whoever is King of England becomes thereby *ipso facto* King of Ireland. If a bill was to pass both houses of Parliament in Ireland for abolishing the Protestant religion, and for establishing the Roman Catholic religion in Ireland, could his Majesty, consistent with the coronation oath taken by him in England, pursuant to the act of union, give the royal assent to such bill whilst the act of union remained in full force in Great Britain? The Romish agent in England will scarce assert that he could.—The Doctor concluded his long speech with a declaration, that he would vote for the rejection of the bill.

MR. G. PONSONBY said, that sensible as he was that at such an hour the house was too much fatigued to hear him, and himself too much fatigued to say any thing worth their hearing, he would be very short; some things, however, had come out in debate, which made it necessary for him to say a few words. With respect to the hon. and learned gentleman (Dr. Duigenan), he entertained for him the greatest esteem, and though he entirely dissented from all his opinions, yet conscious that they were the result of conviction, he respected them. The hon. gentleman had certainly brought his mind into a very odd state, for he now believed things much more strange than even the Catholics believed. On those men he charged tenets, which not only no Catholic, but no rational being could entertain. He could assure the hon. gentleman that he need not fly from the Catholics—for he could assure him they did not think he will be damned for not being a Catholic.—Even Dr. Troy himself, he could assure him, did not believe this, however what he had written ought to be interpreted.—Dr. Troy knew very well, that he would as probably be damned for not riding on horseback!—The hon. gentleman had said that he cared not for their adoration of saints and the Virgin Mary—but that he seriously feared the power of the Pope! and that it was on that ground that he would not admit them into the constitution. In this opinion too the hon. and learned gentleman was singular, for he was certain there was scarcely another man in the kingdom who was afraid of the Pope! His holiness was indeed almost the only man in Europe whom no body was afraid of, and who was afraid of every body: his holiness the Pope! who can with difficulty preserve his wretched dominions; his holiness the Pope! who can scarcely keep the mob of Rome from tearing him from his chair; his holiness the Pope formidable to the house of Hanover seated on the throne of the British empire! His hon. friend feared the powers of the Pope, while another right hon. gentleman blamed the right hon. Bart. who supported the bill for laughing at his holiness, because

cause indeed his holiness had been too much in the habit of being laughed out of countenance!

An hon. member had asserted that his right hon. friend who introduced the bill had evaded the question ; he had asserted that the bill went to repeal the bill of rights, and that any who should act under the bill would incur the penalties of preunire. If we judged from the confidence with which the hon. gentleman had made these assertions, one would be led to imagine he *knew* something of the subject on which he had decided so peremptorily—on a little consideration, however, it appeared the hon. gentleman did not know any thing of the matter—for if he had he would have known (tho' he could not much depend on the hon. gentleman's explanation of an act of parliament) that none of these penalties would attach to the person acting under the bill if it should pass : and what had the bill of rights to do with this bill? Just as much as his holiness the Pope, of whom another learned member was so much afraid. The bill of rights enacted (though in fact it enacted nothing in this country) certain oaths ; those of allegiance and supremacy—but these were part of the compact entered into between the crown and the people of Great Britain—the word “ Ireland” never occurred in this statute, though in every British statute supposed to bind Ireland it did occur.—But at any rate did gentlemen mean to say that the obligation of the statute was eternally binding, and that the parliament of that day had power to bind all posterity for ever? It was a monstrous doctrine—gentlemen did not see the length to which it would carry them ; for if the decision of that parliament was binding for ever in that instance, it was binding for ever in all other cases without exception.

As little had the coronation oath to do with this bill—for that oath was enacted before the laws were passed, which this bill would repeal—yet by the magic of argument gentlemen found a way of making this oath binding on the monarch to the observance of laws which were not enacted until three years afterward.—No! the coronation oath did not bind the King *not* to assent to such laws as should be enacted, but it bound him to execute those laws which should be enacted to preserve the Protestant religion, and to secure to the bishops their churches, &c. Could any gentleman seriously believe that this oath tied up the King in his legislative capacity? It would be a strange constitution indeed which could be guilty of such absurdity! unquestionably it was in his executive capacity only that this oath restrained him ; no men were ever so preposterous as to think of binding up one branch of the legislature by oath to all futurity.

The Hon. Gentleman has observed, that before this session of parliament, the country had been quiet—and he has looked reproach at this side of the House, for he has not ventured openly to express his idea, that it was protestant ambition which had plunged the country into tumult. He would tell that Hon. Gentleman that it was not protestant ambition, nor catholic ambition, nor any thing which had been done by any man in that House, which had plunged

the country into tumult ; but he would inform the Hon. Gentleman what it was that had excited tumult—it was *ministerial duplicity*. The Hon. Gentleman, if he is a confidential minister, as he affects to be, knows what had suggested it, which had produced the disorders. The Hon. Member has said it is not surprising that the protestants have not expressed their sentiments on this measure—for, said he, “ did not Lord Fitzwilliam receive multiplied addresses on the subject, and did he not answer each of them in a pamphlet ? ” Is this a just representation which the Hon. Member gives of the protestants of Ireland ? Are they so mean that they do not express their feeling on a most interesting measure, because a Lord Lieutenant or his secretary happens to think differently from them ? Are these the bold, the high-minded protestants ? If that Hon. Member means to compliment them, I fear they will not thank him much for the manner which he has taken of doing it. But why did not the Hon. Member himself raise his voice even softly against the measure, when he observed the viceroy, about to carry it ? The Hon. Gentleman is sometimes all gentleness, though now he is all fierceness—why did he not hint in one of his gentle moods his disapprobation of an administration whom he observed about to repeal the Bill of Rights and avert the protestant establishment ? Why did he second an address to this very Viceroy, and go on acting with his treacherous ministers who were betraying the country ?

Gentlemen who have spoken against the bill, proffer their lives and fortunes in support of the church and constitution. It is a brave offer—but it is a very safe one too, for the gentlemen know as well as I do, that they will never be called on for either. For my own part, without making such pompous professions, I am as much a friend to both the church and the constitution as they are, and if I thought that this bill would in the smallest degree endanger either, I would be the first to reject it. But I know there is no such danger—I know that the catholics have neither any interest in overturning either, nor any wish to do it—and if they had I know they have not the power.

Much has been said of supporting the protestant interest.—What do gentlemen mean by that word ? Do they mean by supporting the protestant interest to protect the property of protestants, or the lives of protestants ? If this be their meaning I most heartily adopt their sentiment, and profess myself as warm and hearty as they are in that cause.—But if, by the protestant interest they mean an exclusive enjoyment of the benefits of the constitution by protestants, I am no supporter of the protestant interest. The time of exclusive enjoyment seems to be past, and I think, therefore, the time for adopting such a bill as this is now come. It appears wonderful that there is any man who does not see this. To no Member of this house do I mean to attribute improper motives, but I cannot help saying, that the reasons which have been urged against this bill come from another country. This interference of that country on the present occasion I think has arisen from one of two motives—either a wish to colour the recall of Lord Fitzwilliam, or to keep

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this country weak by keeping it divided.—This policy, I had hoped, was past in Great Britain. The wished project of fomenting religious dissensions, in order to facilitate the management of Ireland, certainly once existed, and is acknowledged and inculcated by a man of eminent character in Great Britain, and a staunch whig.—The person I allude to is Bishop Burnet, who says (I have not his words written, but I think I have an accurate recollection of them,)—“ Some persons about this time raised in Ireland the ‘‘ humour of whig and tory ; but it deserves to be considered whe-
“ ther it be for the interest of England that there should be any
“ distinction known in that country, but the distinction of pro-
“ testant and papist.” Liberal as this gentleman was in whatever concerned his own country, he thought it right to keep alive the religious difference between papist and protestant, and professedly for the purpose of weakening Ireland for the benefit of Great Britain.

Mr. Ponsonby now called on gentlemen very earnestly, to consider the situation in which they stood, and what had passed in this country recently ; they had seen an administration encourage the protestant against the catholic pretensions ; they had seen the same administration excite the claims of those same catholics ; and, ultimately, they had seen that very administration, after having alternately encouraged each party against the other, pass a bill in favour of those catholics, in opposition to the sentiments of the protestants, which that administration had excited. Would gentlemen be humble enough to continue playing this game ? If not, there was but one way to avoid it, and that was to put an end to the possibility of difference between the two descriptions, by adopting the catholics into the bosom of the constitution, and thus bless and exalt the country.

The Hon. Mr. STEWART rose to make a few remarks on the administration of Lord Fitzwilliam, and on the pamphlets published, containing his lordship's answers to the addressees of the Roman Catholics. He said he did not consider that any gentleman, who was not really in office and responsible, could with propriety be called the minister. He admitted he moved an address to his Majesty, on Lord Fitzwilliam's being appointed lord lieutenant of Ireland.

Mr. CURRAN said he meant, not at that late hour, to trouble the house at large on the question. He had from the first been a friend to the deliverance of the catholics. He thought their claims irresistible on every principle of policy and justice.

He had more than once given his reasons for that opinion. It was not necessary then to repeat them. Never did a cause stand less in need of additional defence. Very little therefore would he now add ; particularly as the speech of a right hon. gentleman had made it manifest that gentlemen had come with their minds prepared upon the subject, and that it was a question of division, and not of debate.

bate. He felt himself forced, he said, to rise to set right some things that had been asserted in the debate. An hon. and learned gentleman had been pleased to mix the names of the catholics with that of Mr. Jackson, who was lately tried for treason. It was only justice to that body of our fellow-subjects to say, in the presence of the Attorney General, who conducted that prosecution, that not one syllable was said upon that trial, nor did any circumstance whatsoever appear, that could warrant even a suspicion of the most distant intercourse between any one catholic and that unfortunate man; and he was glad of being able to make that assertion in that public place, in order that if any calumny of that sort should be ever uttered against them, it might be known to be most malicious and unfounded. He adverted very pointedly on the impropriety of talking so familiarly of the names of individuals in parliament. It was, he said, abusing the absent, who ought to have at least the opportunity of answering—or of saying, what they probably would say, that they thought such aspersions unworthy of reply. It was also, he said, asserted, that the bill was penned in a particular quarter, on which the learned gentleman had been very liberal of contemptuous language—He begged to assure him he was mistaken; the bill was not penned by those persons.

If it was blameable, it was only just to say where the guilt was chargeable. Part of the guilt, he said, was with himself—he had assisted in framing that bill. The right hon. mover had the greater part of the guilt to answer for; he was at a loss, however, to find out in what that guilt consisted. He had thought of it much, but he could not find out the criminality. The nation was of his opinion—every persuasion was of his opinion; he was convinced, therefore, not of its guilt, but of its justice. He was satisfied that if Ireland was to be saved, it could be done only by the emancipation of the catholics, and the union of the people. It is no longer, he said, a question between the protestants and the catholics, but between the minister and the country; the mode of the debate had shewn this. Gentlemen had not even touched upon the first arguments upon which they had formerly supported their opposition—namely, the danger to property. They had this night confined themselves to idle aspersions on the persons of the catholics, or to idle boasting of their own loyalty and orthodox. For his own part, he said, he thought there was no great merit in having the one, nor any great certainty of having the other to boast of. If he was not convinced the present bill was perfectly reconcileable with both, he should not think of giving it the warm support which he had, and would while he lived continue to give it.

He felt himself, he said, falling into the merits of the debate, contrary to his resolution when he rose. He had heard a learned gentleman use a very celebrated and respected name in a most extraordinary manner. He had heard something like it before; he had let it pass unnoticed. He was unwilling to rise as the advocate of that gentleman's person or character; they were too high above such censure to require defence.—There might have seemed

as much egotism as zeal or respect in taking the province of his defender; but he could not, for the honour of the house, suffer an idea to go abroad, that the name of Mr. Edmund Burke had been treated with disrespect, without expressing the strongest indignation at such a breach of decorum. He should lament that this house could be thought so dead to all sense of such exalted merit, as tamely to endure a language, the disgrace of which could fall only on themselves. But he said it seemed to be a night of unmerited imputation. A young member (Mr. Stuart) had been pleased to say he hoped the present administration would relieve this country from the bad conduct of the last. It was a subject on which he would enter the lists with the hon. member. He was sorry, he said, so young a man could entertain so mean an opinion of the house, as to use such language.

He was surprised that the young member should, at so early an age, give the house credit for so much levity and inconsistency as they must possess, if they should listen quietly to such an asperion on the character of a Viceroy whom they had declared unanimously to deserve the thanks of that house, and the confidence of the people. As for his part, he said, he should think it time very much mispent to go into any detail of that noble Lord's merits with this country; he rather regretted the consequences of their being so universally felt as they were.

Mr. Curran then adverted to an observation of the same hon. member, of office without responsibility or place; it was a circumstance he confessed, which marked the government of Lord Fitzwilliam. He saw not much likelihood of its being repeated. It would, he feared, be as difficult to find the same talents, as the disinterestedness of the right hon. member to whom the gentleman had alluded; he had lent his great powers to his country without the emolument of office. He was sorry to find the hon. young member not more sensible of that merit.—As he advanced in years, he trusted that he would think more justly, and perhaps improve so much as to make a splendid model the object of more respect—perhaps of imitation. He would take the liberty of saying to him

*Disce, Puer, virtutem ex illo,
Verumque laborem;
Fortunam ex aliis.*

Dr. DUGENAN rose to explain, that what he had said relative to Mr. Burke, was from what appeared in the public newspapers.

At about ten o'clock in the morning Sir J. BLAQUIERE rose. He said, if he had offered himself to the attention of the House at an earlier hour, he should have stated at length what he would now do in few words, that the bill under their consideration made only a part of one extensive and well-digested system for an entire change of the constitution, leading, through the medium of a reform in parliament, to a separation or an union; and he hesitated

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the less in saying so, as he was convinced by what the learned Doctor (Dr. Duigenan) had stated, that this bill was not the work of the Right Honorable Member who introduced it, but came from a set of men the most despicable and dangerous in society—not from the respectable body of the catholics, whom all men revered. He should at an earlier hour have taken some pains to convince the House of the truth of this position; but in the debate gentlemen had saved him that trouble, openly avowing the design of grafting upon the present measure, a radical reform of the representation of the people in parliament.

One gentleman in particular, (Mr. O'Connor) had said it with more eloquence than discretion.—Sir J. B. then adverting to the present situation of the kingdom, observed, an honourable and learned gentleman (Mr. G. Ponsonby) had taken a freedom with his own friends, which he should not have ventured to have suggested; for if to the duplicity of administration the present disturbances were to be ascribed, it could not possibly attach upon Lord Camden's, whose government was insulted on the very day of his landing, so that it must have been Lord Fitzwilliam's administration which the honorable and learned gentleman had alluded to.—Several gentlemen had insinuated, for that was now the fashion in speaking as well as writing, (alluding we suppose to Lord Fitzwilliam's letters) that had Lord Fitzwilliam continued in the government, this bill would have met with a better fate than was likely to attend it at the present moment. He begged the House to indulge him when he ventured to mention so inconsiderable a person as himself; that nobleman had with great condescension and breeding hearkened to his opinion upon the subject, and he had explicitly stated to his Excellency his determination to resist the measure, the truth of which could be readily verified if certain gentlemen present should think it worth their while to enquire. But a stronger argument could not be adduced than the very warm support it had this night received from gentlemen in office, and in the confidence of government. It was upon its principle he should resist this dangerous innovation—but he should oppose it also on its mode of entering the House, and on other grounds. Petitions dictated by the societies in Dublin, brought forward by the body in mass, meant something more than supplications.—There was no difference in his mind between the highwayman and the beggar, but in the mode of asking; the one implores relief for his starving children; the other, with a pistol at your breast, says he is the younger son of a very good family, and if you do not deliver your money, he must starve himself—and would gentlemen in their senses put arms into the hands of these people, (as enacted by the present bill) at a moment when, according to his judgment, it is become the duty of the executive government to take from them all the arms they have, at least, in the disturbed counties.—It was much comfort to him, he said, that the measure was brought to its crisis—a long and instructive debate had taken place;—the thing was now without a mask—the protestant power was to be put down—but he blessed his God, the protest-

tants had not given up that power yet—no—they had the power still in their hands—they had a good cause to defend—and the throne of their king to rally to, in case of need; and under these circumstances, he trusted, they would not be so mad, as to part with the smallest particle of their present consideration.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL closed the debate with a few words, in strong and decisive terms, against the bill;

And the question being loudly called for on all sides, the House divided at half after ten o'clock on Tuesday morning, the 5th of May, when the numbers for the rejection were

Ayes—155.—Noes—84.

Tellers for the Ayes, Lord KINGSBOROUGH, and the Rt. Hon. Mr. CUFFE.

Tellers for the Noes, Mr. GEORGE PONSONBY, and Mr. MAURICE FITZGERALD.

A P P E N D I X.

To put the Reader in complete possession of the subject of the foregoing Debate, the Petition of the Catholics, and the Bill, are annexed.

To the Right Honourable and Honourable the Knights, Citizens,
and Burghesses in Parliament assembled.

T H E
P E T I T I O N
O F

The undersigned, on Behalf of themselves and others his
Majesty's Catholic Subjects of the City of Dublin*,

M O S T H U M B L Y S H E W E T H ,

THAT in pursuance of his Majesty's most gracious and paternal recommendation of the situation of his Catholic subjects of this Kingdom to the wisdom and liberality of his parliament, this honourable house was, in the course of the session of 1793, pleased to remove many of the disabilities, pains and penalties under which the Catholics of Ireland had so long laboured, by a repeal of divers severe and oppressive laws peculiarly affecting that body. That while your petitioners feel the deepest and most lively sense of the wisdom and goodness of parliament, manifested in the repeal of the said penal and restrictive statutes, they cannot in justice to themselves refrain from most humbly submitting, that the Catholics of Ireland have been and still are, in a number and variety of instances, prevented from enjoying the full benefit of the constitution of their country, by the existence of certain disabilities and restraints which your petitioners do now, with all humility and deference, presume to hope, on every principle, as well of expediency as of justice, it will no longer be thought necessary to retain. That your petitioners do most humbly presume to suggest to the wisdom of this honourable house, that the most effectual mode to unite in sentiment all his Majesty's subjects of Ireland in support of our most excellent constitution, agreeably to his gracious and paternal wish, will be to extend to them its blessings, by the abolition of those incapacities and disqualifications of which your petitioners presume most humbly to complain. Your petitioners therefore most humbly pray that this honourable house, taking the situation of your petitioners into consideration, their loyalty to their sovereign, their respect to the legislature, and dutiful and obedient submission to the laws, may be pleased to restore them to a full enjoyment of the blessings of our most excellent constitution, by a repeal of all the penal and restrictive laws now affecting the Catholics of Ireland.

And your petitioners will pray.

* This Petition is the same as those presented from the Catholics of the several counties, towns, &c. throughout the kingdom.

A B I L L

F O R

The further Relief of his Majesty's Popish or Roman Catholic Subjects of Ireland.

WHEREAS by an act of parliament passed in the thirty-third year of his Majesty's reign, entitled, an act for the relief of his Majesty's popish or Roman Catholic subjects of Ireland, several restraints, disabilities and incapacities to which his Majesty's subjects in this kingdom being papists, or persons professing the Popish or Roman Catholic religion had been subjected were removed, but his Majesty's said subjects still remain under certain other restraints, disabilities and incapacities which it is right and expedient to remove: therefore,

Be it enacted, by the King's most excellent Majesty, by and with the advice and consent of the Lords Spiritual and Temporal and Commons in this present parliament assembled, and by the authority of the same, that so much of the said act passed in the thirty-third year of his Majesty's reign as requires Papists or Roman Catholics possessing a freehold estate of ten pounds yearly and less than one hundred pounds, or a personal estate of three hundred pounds and less than one thousand pounds; to take at the session of the peace in the county in which they reside, the oath of allegiance prescribed to be taken by an act of parliament passed in the thirteenth and fourteenth years of his present Majesty's reign, entitled, an act to enable his Majesty's subjects of whatever persuasion to testify their allegiance to him, and also in an open court, to swear and subscribe an affidavit that they are possessed of a freehold estate, yielding a clear yearly profit to the person making the same, of ten pounds, or a personal property of three hundred pounds above his just debts, and the name and nature of such freehold, in order to authorize such persons to keep and use arms and ammunition as protestants may, be and the same is hereby repealed.

And be it enacted, that it shall and may be lawful for Papists or persons professing the Popish or Roman Catholic religion, who shall have at the sessions of peace in the county in which such persons respectively reside, taken and subscribed the oath of allegiance prescribed to be taken by the said act, passed in the thirteenth and fourteenth years of his Majesty's reign, entitled, an act to enable his Majesty's subjects of whatever persuasion, to testify their allegiance to him, and also the oath and declaration set forth in and prescribed to be taken by the said act, passed in the thirty-third year of his Majesty's reign, entitled, an act for the relief of his Majesty's Popish or Roman Catholic subjects of Ireland, on which the clerk of the peace shall have for his trouble a fee of six-pence, to keep and use arms and ammunition as protestants may now by law, any statute to the contrary notwithstanding.

And be it enacted, that so much of the said act passed in the thirty-third year of his Majesty's reign, as provides and enacts that nothing therein contained shall extend, or be construed to extend, to enable any person to sit or vote in either houses of parliament, or to hold, exercise or enjoy, the office of Lord High Chancellor, Lord High Treasurer, Chancellor of the Exchequer, Chief Justice of the Court of King's Bench or Common Pleas, Lord Chief Baron of the Court of Exchequer, Justice of the Court of King's Bench or Common Pleas, or Baron of the Court of Exchequer, Judge of the High Court of Admiralty, Master or Keeper of the Rolls, Secretary of State, Keeper of the Privy Seal, Vice-Treasurer, or Deputy Vice-Treasurer, Teller and Cashier of the Exchequer, or Auditor General, Lieutenant or Governor, or Custos Rotulorum of Counties, Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant, Lord Deputy,

or other Chief Governor or Governors of this Kingdom, Member of his Majesty's most Honourable Privy Council, Prime Serjeant, Attorney General, Solicitor General, second and third Serjeant at Law, or King's Counsel, Master in Chancery, Post Master General, Master and Lieutenant General of his Majesty's Ordnance, Commander in Chief of his Majesty's Forces, Generals on the Staff, and Sheriffs and Sub-Sheriffs of any county in this Kingdom, or any Office contrary to the rules, orders and directions made and established by the Lord Lieutenant and Council, in pursuance of the act passed in the seventeenth and eighteenth years of the reign of king Charles the second, entitled, an act for explaining of some doubts arising upon an act, entitled, an act for the better execution of his Majesty's gracious declaration for the settlement of his kingdom of Ireland, and satisfaction of the several interests of adventurers, soldiers and other his subjects there, and for making some alterations of and additions unto the said act, for the more speedy and effectual settlement of this kingdom, unless he shall have taken, made and subscribed the oaths and declaration, and performed the several requisites which by any act heretofore made and now of force, are required to enable any person to sit or vote, or hold or exercise and enjoy the said offices respectively, be and the same is hereby repealed.

And be it enacted, that it shall and may be lawful for Papists or persons professing the Popish or Roman Catholic religion, to sit and vote in either house of parliament, and to hold, exercise and enjoy the offices of Lord High Chancellor, Lord High Treasurer, Chancellor of the Exchequer, Chief Justice of the Court of King's Bench or Common Pleas, Lord Chief Baron of the Court of Exchequer, Justice of the Court of King's Bench or Common Pleas, or Baron of the Court of Exchequer, Judge of the High Court of Admiralty, Master or Keeper of the Rolls, Secretary of State, Keeper of the Privy Seal, Vice-Treasurer or Deputy Vice-Treasurer, Teller and Cashier of the Exchequer, or Auditor-General, Lieutenant or Governor or Custos Rotulorum of Counties, Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant, Lord Deputy or other Chief Governor or Governors of this kingdom, Member of his Majesty's Most Honourable Privy Council, Prime Serjeant, Attorney General, Solicitor General, second and third Serjeant at Law, or King's Counsel, Master in Chancery, Post-Master General, Master and Lieutenant-General of his Majesty's Ordnance, Commander in Chief of his Majesty's Forces, Generals on the Staff, and Sheriffs and Sub-Sheriffs of any county or county of a town or city in this kingdom, or to be members of any lay body corporate, or to hold any office in any lay corporation, which they are, or may be excluded by the rules, orders and directions made and established by the Lord Lieutenant and Council, in pursuance of the act passed in the seventeenth and eighteenth years of the reign of King Charles the second, entitled, an act for explaining some doubts arising upon an act, entitled, an act for the better execution of his Majesty's gracious declaration for the settlement of his kingdom of Ireland, and satisfaction of the several interests of adventurers, soldiers, and other his subjects there, and for making some alterations of, and additions unto the said act, for the more speedy and effectual settlement of this kingdom, without taking and subscribing the oaths of allegiance, supremacy or abjuration, or making or subscribing the declaration required to be taken, made and subscribed, to enable any person to hold and enjoy any of such places, and also without receiving the sacrament of the Lord's supper according to the rites and ceremonies of the church of Ireland, any law, statute, or bye law of any corporation to the contrary notwithstanding.

Provided always, that every such person take and subscribe the said oath appointed by the said act, passed in the thirteenth and fourteenth years of his Majesty's reign, entitled, an act to enable his Majesty's subjects of whatever persuasion to testify their allegiance to him; and also the said oath and declaration set forth and prescribed in the said act, passed in the thirty-third year of his Majesty's reign, entitled, an act for the relief of his Majesty's Popish or Roman Catholic subjects of Ireland.

And be it enacted, that so much of an act passed in the eighth year of the reign of her late Majesty Anne, entitled, an act for explaining and amending an act, entitled, an act to prevent the further growth of popery, as enacts, that whatsoever person of the Popish religion shall publicly teach school or shall instruct youth in

in learning in any private house within this realm, or shall be entertained to instruct youth in learning, as usher, under master or assistant by any protestant school-master, shall be esteemed and taken to be a Popish regular clergyman, and be prosecuted as such, and incur such pains, penalties and forfeitures, as any Popish regular convict is liable unto by the laws and statutes of this realm, and which enacts, that no person whatsoever, after the first day of November, one thousand seven hundred and nine, shall be qualified to teach or keep school publicly, or teach and instruct youth in learning in any private house, or as usher or assistant to any protestant school-master, who shall not first, or at the next general assizes or general quarter sessions of the peace, to be held for the county where such person shall inhabit or reside, after such person is so entertained, take the oath of allegiance, and make and subscribe the declaration, and take and subscribe the oath of abjuration, as in the act therein mentioned is directed and expressed, and as inflicts any forfeiture on any person who shall offend therein, or any person who shall entertain any one not qualified as aforesaid, as tutor, under-master, usher or assistant, be and the same is hereby repealed.

And be it enacted, that so much of the said act passed the thirty-third year of his Majesty's reign, as provides that any college to be thereafter founded in this kingdom, in which it shall be lawful for Papists or persons professing the Popish or Roman Catholic religion to hold or to take degrees or professorships, or to be masters or fellows, shall be a member of the University of Dublin, and shall not be founded exclusively for the education of Papists or persons professing the Popish or Roman Catholic religion, and shall not consist exclusively of masters, fellows or other persons to be named or elected on the foundation of such college, being persons professing the Popish or Roman Catholic religion, shall be, and the same is hereby repealed.

And be it enacted, that so much of an act passed in the twenty-first and twenty-second years of the reign of his present Majesty, entitled, an act to allow persons professing the Popish religion to teach school in this kingdom, and for regulating the education of papists; and also to repeal parts of certain laws relative to the guardianship of their children, as provides that nothing therein shall extend or be construed to extend to any Popish school-master who should receive into his school any person of the Protestant religion, or to any person of the Popish religion who should be entertained to instruct youth in learning, as usher, under-master or assistant, by any protestant school-master within this realm, shall be, and the same is hereby repealed.

And be it enacted, that so much of a clause in the said act passed in the thirty-third year of his Majesty's reign, as incapacitates any Papist or person professing the Popish religion to vote at any parish vestry at the election of a church-warden, be and the same is hereby repealed.

And be it enacted, that it shall and may be lawful for any Papist or person professing the Popish religion, to vote at any parish vestry, at the election of a church-warden, any law to the contrary thereof notwithstanding.

And be it further enacted, that it shall and may be lawful for Papists or persons professing the Popish or Roman Catholic religion, serving as commissioned and non-commissioned officers or soldiers in his Majesty's regular forces within this kingdom, to attend the celebration of divine worship according to the ceremonies of the Roman Catholic church, in as full and free a manner as protestants, being officers or soldiers are now permitted to attend the celebration of divine service according to the rites of the church of Ireland, any law, statute, custom or usage to the contrary notwithstanding.